

distaste for ceremonial and formally remained among his more attractive characteristics. The man who, on arriving in Washington in 1864 to become commander-in-chief, signed the register at Willard's Hotel simply as "U.S. Grant and son, Okeana, Ill." was the same man who, on his world tour in 1878, kept an appointment with Bismarck by strolling casually through the courtyard of the Radziwill Palace, tossing away his cigar butt, and preparing to knock on the front door, had an alert servant not opened it just in time. (Incidentally, Grant thought Bismarck and Gambetta the two most impressive men whom he met on his travels.) But the easiness and informality were the other side of the coin of the shabbiness and seediness of the atmosphere which surrounded Grant, his relations and his encouragement - and which pursued him to his death-bed through family problems and financial failure.

In 1884, he contracted cancer of the throat, and, in his final year, despite pain and growing weakness, he wrote the two volumes of his military memoirs, in an effort to provide financial help for his wife and family. In this he succeeded spectacularly, for the royalties brought his widow about half a million dollars within two-and-a-half years of publication. But scandal and exploitation also followed him to the last. In June 1885, the dying Grant was moved to Mount McGregor in the foothills of the Adirondacks partly as a publicity stunt for a new resort hotel. The completion of his memoirs was sullied by a squall row with Adam Badeau, his former friend and aide, who later sued for a share of the royalties on the ground that he was part-author. Grant died on July 23, 1885, within days of completing work on his book. He left a set of military memoirs of remarkable quality written in a style which reflects much that was best in the man himself: simple but not simple-minded, direct but not dogmatic, plain but not

crude. Inarticulate he may have been, but Grant was certainly not illiterate.

Professor McFeely sees Grant as an essentially ordinary person who did not think of himself as ordinary, an ambitious man "who became general and president because he could find nothing better to do." It is a plausible but not, ultimately, a convincing view. It requires a serious belittling of Grant's stature as a military commander. More broadly, it does not quite penetrate to the heart of the Grant enigma, and it is not helped by McFeely's attempts to buttress it with some heavy-handed psychological conjectures. (A boyhood episode involving the purchase of a horse assumes extravagantly disproportionate importance, and even the four-year engagement which preceded the marriage of Ulysses and Julia Grant is not allowed to pass without some rumormongers on "the eroticism of besitation".)

McFeely's biography is soundly based on wide research in manuscript and other sources, and it is written in a style more serviceable than elegant. While the book is unconvincing and sometimes unjust on the subject of Grant the soldier, it is authoritative and discriminating on Grant the president, and best of all on the very important years between Appomattox and the White House, 1867. It excels at earlier biographies of Grant in its serious attempt to see Grant and his career in the round, and as a whole, rather than as a series of barely connected chapters. The attempt is well worth making, and, if it does not quite succeed, the explanation may lie partly in the author's somewhat ambiguous attitude to his subject but above all in the formidable challenge presented by Grant's personality and character. If, in the end, McFeely has been defeated by Grant, he has the consolation, at least, of joining a distinguished company, presided over by Robert E. Lee himself.

A man's own vision

By Alan Young

JAMES NAGEL

Stephen Crane and Literary Impressionism

190pp. Pennsylvania State University Press. £9.00. 0 271 00256 0

When *The Red Badge of Courage* appeared in 1895, the novel's vivid authenticity was so convincing that one critic pronounced it the most realistic of a Civil War veteran. In fact, it was the work of a young man aged twenty-four who had indeed experienced war at first hand, but as a reporter in Cuba and Greece. James Nagel's study is a scholarly interpretation of Stephen Crane's "impressionistic" fictions. It has some of the faults of academic criticism, including laboured points, repetitious summaries and a formidable stream of references to the opinions of other scholars. In spite of some tediousness, however, this is a useful introduction to Crane's prose writings as well as to the theory of literary impressionism.

Crane's contemporaries recognized affinities between his attitudes and methods and those of French and American Impressionist painters. Crane called that remarkable story "The Open Boat" (which H. G. Wells regarded as the crown of Crane's fiction) "the work of a complete impressionist". Later, Conrad wrote to Edward Garnett - another of Crane's admirers - that Crane was "the only impressionist, and only an impressionist". Professor Nagel agrees with and develops Crane's judgment, though he argues that literary impressionism has lower, expressive limitations and many more imitative possibilities than Conrad admitted.

In his opening chapters Nagel explores Crane's links with Impressionist painting and theory, demonstrating convincingly that the young writer's

the Art Students' League in the early 1890s and his interest in the teachings of the progressive American art critic Hamlin Garland during the same period have been examined by other scholars, but Nagel's analyses take us further and deeper.

Crane's Impressionism takes an important step towards modernism in fiction because although it entails explicit attitudes towards the world, it aims for artistic effect rather than a coherent philosophical position - for what Crane called "simple fidelity to a man's own vision". Thus his characters are isolated, uncertain of the truth of their necessary limited perspectives. At best, episodic perceptions build up a character, capable of Joycean-style epiphanies (like Henry Fleming in *The Red Badge of Courage*), a character capable of changing his life through greater self-knowledge. Other characters, however, never learn from experience. All the principal figures in Nagel's view, although Crane presents them rather than explains his narrative, reveal dramatically the moral freedom and responsibility of all his major characters. In doing so he also rejects deterministic naturalism.

As an impressionist, Crane is also viewed rather ambitiously by Nagel as a founding father of Imagism, expressionism, stream-of-consciousness techniques, and literary existentialism. There is little doubt, however, that he did have a formative influence on Faulkner, Hemingway and other twentieth-century American writers.

More importantly, Nagel makes the reader look anew at Crane's artistry, not only in the novels but in such shorter masterpieces as "The Open Boat", "The Blue Hotel", "The Bride Comes to Yellow Sky", and "Death and the Child". It is puzzling that he has little to say about Crane's spare and bleak, truly modernist poems. Perhaps the reason for this omission is that the poems' most intensely personal visions will not fit neatly into genre categories of any kind?

Transatlantic view

By Esmond Wright

K.G. DAVIES (Editor)

Documents of the American Revolution 1770-83. Colonial Office series

21 Volumes. Dublin: Irish Academic Press. £560 the set. 0 7165 2085 0

Anniversaries are occasions to be exploited by individuals for rejoicing or for nostalgic recall, by governments for patriotic purposes, by scholars to direct attention to new or hitherto unexplored topics. So it was with the Bicentennial of American Independence in 1976. Amid the trivia of cups and pots and tea and flags, the Freedom Train that crossed the United States from coast to coast, and all the State and Federal exhibitions, some scholars used the occasion for their own proper purposes. A group of Loyalist historians in Canada, the United States and Britain formed a consortium, raised money and began producing a finding-list of sources of information on all those, some one in five of the North American population, who in 1776 stayed loyal to George III. A number of volumes on them will be appearing in 1982.

One of these scholars, Professor K.G. Davies, now of Trinity College, Dublin, began editing and printing this magnificent collection of twenty-one volumes, which provide for all interested in the British side of the story of the years of the War of Independence, a splendid archive of material that has never before appeared in print. The editor and his press, working without any public subsidy, deserve congratulation for their enterprise, their skill, their handsome book-making - and not least their assiduity. The first volume was published in 1972, the twenty-first and final in 1981: by any standards that is remarkable these days. For one man to do it, all but unaided, constitutes an outstanding scholarly achievement.

Davies has assembled his collection from the Colonial Office records relating to North America, including Canada, from 1770 to 1783. He has done his digging in 570 manuscript volumes and bundles of records, each of them averaging some 200 folios in length, so that, for these thirteen years, he has worked through some 120,000 folios in all. He gives here a summary of every document which has survived, whether originating in Whitehall or in the colonies, arranged in chronological sequence. These volumes he calls *Calendars*, and there are seven of them (Volumes I, IV, VII, X, XIII, XVI, and XIX), summarizing 27,410 items. Documents of outstanding interest are printed in *extenso*, and these appear in fourteen volumes of *Transcripts*. Each volume is prefaced by short introductory statements by the editor, which are themselves models of all-too-brief analysis. His comments in Volume XIV on the failure of the Burgoyne expedition of 1777 are especially valuable.

The great merit of this collection is that it gives the Whitehall view of these years. Here is the evidence of the day-by-day British administration - or, critics would add, maladministration - of the thirteen colonies on the North American mainland (unfortunately, the Caribbean colonies have had to be omitted, because to have included them would have added immensely to the cost and time). Presented here are the views of those who sat at the desks of the North American Department (set up two years before), and of the Treasury and Admiralty, the War Office and Board of Trade. The collection is thus a reminder of how an empire was run and lost, and of how it responded or failed to respond to the pressures of events. After two decades of emphasis in American scholarship on the detailed intellectual, social, demographic, economic and religious aspects of seventeenth-century America, this is a reminder that, at least until 1776, the mainland colonies were, in Benjamin Franklin's phrase, "the Empire on this side". The collection was first and last, to what purpose, is hard to say. It is a reminder of the vastness of the British Empire, and of the vastness of the British Empire, and of the vastness of the British Empire.

A further strength of the collection lies in its pragmatic quality. It recreates the situation as the Secretary of State for the American Department saw it, directing attention to issues which seemed important to him at the time, and not merely those which have gained in significance from subsequent events. Thus, in Volume I (1770-71) there are letters and affidavits, depositions and sworn testimonies sent by Thomas Hutchinson, the Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts, describing certain incidents on King Street, from which five deaths followed, the event known to later history as the Boston Massacre (March 1770). But in that same year the Secretary of State received almost as many letters from the Governor and Lieutenant-Governor of West Florida as from the Lieutenant-Governor of Massachusetts.

Frontiers and boundaries and external defence, Quebec and the Mississippi Valley mattered most of all. We catch glimpses of some fascinating episodes that are only marginally related to "1776 and all that": Governor Lord William Campbell's plan to form an Indian village near Halifax, Nova Scotia, modelled on those of New England and Canada; Robert Rogers's scheme for exploring a north-west passage; Governor Grant's concern for the future of the Greek settlement at New Smyrna in East Florida; and many documents bearing on Indian affairs, including the efforts of the so-called Western Indians, mainly Delaware and Shawnee, to form a confederacy in opposition to the Six Nations, because of their close relations with the whites. Hillsborough as Secretary of State wanted to follow a policy of honourable non-intervention in Indian affairs; to the men on the spot, bedevilled by traders who were continually involved with Indians, by settlers greedy for land, and by adventurers like John Thomas, active among the "small tribes" on the Mississippi, such a policy, however admirable, was merely an expression of remote and vaporous ideas. Subsequent armchair historians have seen the activities of Sir William Johnson and Captain John Stuart, the Indian Superintendents, as the machinations of men who believed in divide-and-rule; on this evidence their policies appear simply to be a struggle for survival.

To offer any conclusions after skimming through this splendid and daunting archive would be presumptuous. But one gets an impression here of an empire collapsing from corruption - a favourite word used of it by contemporary Americans (and all-too-often by their descendants). If Hillsborough, as Secretary of State for the American Department from 1768 to 1772, emerges as assiduous, plodding and uninspired, his wise and liberal in his Indian policy, as such impressions arise of his successor, Lord Dartmouth, after 1773, Lord George Germain. From the latter, in particular, flowed orders, advice and encouragement over the years. He was fully aware that he must leave tactics to "his generals' judgement" (August 2, 1775), though he clearly regretted it. He stands guilty here only of imprecise orders in the campaign of 1777.

Nor is there any special evidence of a dominant role being played by the second-line bureaucrats, John Pownall (under-secretary until 1775), William Knox (Pownall's successor), Morgann, Grey, or the "Omniscient" Richard Jackson. They dealt mainly with inter-departmental matters, or, in Jackson's case, with matters of law, rarely with orders from the top. Their special skill lay in their command of official language, in blunting and refining the suggestions, so that tastes and preferences still emerge iconically, as "His Majesty approves". The letters from governors were usually more probing - at least those of Governor Josiah Martin of North Carolina - but some, like Dunmore in Virginia, did not write a single official dispatch in the twelve months of 1773-74. There is little, however, that is ably personal. Davies confirms his probing of the letters between private individuals interpreted by the home government in the first year of the war to be a mere appendix. Nor is there much of the bitterness or sadness which Loyalist letters convey. We

could have done with more of the anguish of Governor Patrick Henry of East Florida, writing to William Knox, on July 18, 1775: "I have been more savage" (his private letters were examined and left open). Oh, shock, shock for Governor Towns by May 1783, when the surrender by British in Florida that had stayed loyal for six years drove him and some 12,000 British there into permanent and bitter exile.

The viewpoint, moreover, is that of Whitehall, not of Westminster. There is little evidence here of Ministers speaking for or being restrained by Parliament; they are the name of the King, not of the Commons. There was no American lobby, as there was a West Indian or a Nabobs' lobby, between 1763 and 1783 only five Americans sat in the House of Commons, and of these no more than three were any one time. Those who knew America at first hand, such as William Knox or John Pownall's brother Thomas, were never fully trusted - and Thomas Pownall was seen and endured as a long-winded bore. Few in power before 1775 listened to the real voices of America, the colonists, and least of all to the ablest and wisest of them, Benjamin Franklin.

What does emerge from these documents is the sense of distance, physical and psychological, between those in Whitehall, who were honourable but often ignorant men, and those, 3,000 miles or more away, who were equally honourable but often bewildered men. It took at least a month for a letter to get through, and every letter usually had to be sent twice. It took at least another month for a reply. Once the crisis moved towards a clash of arms, all replies were out of date. In these circumstances it was all but impossible to conduct from Whitehall a war against a continent. "Seas and winds on the pass," said Burke, "between the order and the execution." The Elephant could serve as a metaphor. While, and in the end wear down an enemy. And those land commanders, whom the Whitehall staff, given an impression, in these pages, of competence or confidence. Their burden was all but impossible. The doubling of the office of commander-in-chief with that of Governor of Massachusetts in 1778 was as unwise as it was confusing. Germain at least had an energy and a flair, lacking, it seems, in George and Howe and Clinton. Energetic, William Howe was clearly rare: only Lord Haldimand in Quebec came well out of this evidence.

These are but first impressions. There is rich material here; on the right played by the Board of Associated Loyalists; on the preoccupation before 1775 with the Mississippi and the policy of protection for Indians; on the role of William Franklin in the latter stages of the war; on the problems of pacifying the West Indies as well as mainland America after 1778; and the tedious, but full and detailed, some will regret that the series begins in 1770, with the Boston Massacre and Lord North's premiership, since, as Davies notes, that is to enter in media res a better starlight data would have been 1763, but that would have delayed the completion of the project, and the twelve years covered here are certainly richer than the previous seven. The older "Imperial" historians, like K. V. Harlow and Charles Andrews, would Osgood and L. H. Gipson, would, however, have been proud of the evidence provided here that confirms so clearly their own view and speculation of some fifty years ago. Professor Davies has brought an ambitious undertaking to prompt completion, and by doing so put all scholars of Anglo-American relations in the eighteenth century deeply in his debt.

The Papers of John C. Calhoun Volume XIII, 1835-1837 (Edinburgh: University of South Carolina Press, 1972, 392 pp.) edited by Clyde Wilson has recently been published. The volume contains all Calhoun's correspondence, recorded speeches and papers for the period

Good government

By David Abulafia

WILLIAM M. BOWSKY

A Medieval Italian Commune. Siena under the Nine, 1287-1355. 327pp. University of California Press. £21. 0 520 04256 5

Siena, as William M. Bowsky readily admits, was only a second-rank Italian city in the late thirteenth and fourteenth centuries. Its claim to major significance lies not so much in great military, diplomatic or economic achievements, but in the unusual stability of its republican government, the "Nine Governors and Defenders of the Commune and the People of Siena". It is with this dimension to Sienese affairs, rather than the city's other achievements - the work of Simone Martini, the enhancement and planned extension of the cathedral - that Bowsky's book is primarily concerned. The emphasis is on the structure of government and on the daily concerns of the Nine and their deputies: to ensure adequate provisioning, to protect the city's merchants from afar, to limit violence on the streets.

Professor Bowsky shows an extraordinary knowledge of the Sienese archives, and his book offers invaluable clues to where the historian of Siena should look for what. On the other hand, there is no extended introduction to the sources; nor does he find much space for a survey of Sienese history before the accession of the Nine in 1287. Nor is there very much comparison with the experiences of other self-governing towns in Italy, excepting Florence - itself rather out of the ordinary. Here, of course, it can be objected that Siena too had a very special experience: a "popular" government of remarkable longevity. It was not simply a medieval Italian commune, as Bowsky's title indicates. Yet the problem of say, food supplies or of roaming mercenaries was one which it faced in common with its Tuscan neighbours. Historians of other Italian towns will find themselves dubious to examine how far the response of the Sienese to major problems was mirrored in practice elsewhere.

Recording the recorders

By Denys Hay

ERIC COCHRANE

Historians and Historiography in the Italian Renaissance. 649pp. University of Chicago Press. £26.25. 0 226 11152 0

This very long book almost confirms one in the conviction that a history of Italy prior to the eighteenth century is hard if not impossible, so divided and subdivided was the land until the mid-sixteenth century. Perhaps a bird's-eye view of its historiography in a shorter book would present a more manageable and (paradoxically) comprehensible picture, and a less costly one.

One reason for the length of the book is that Eric Cochrane has given his readers far more than his title suggests. His study runs from the eleventh and twelfth centuries to the end of the sixteenth century, and even beyond; and much of it contains information to be found only in specialist and local journals. For the earlier part (about 150 pages) many of the vast majority of all but local historians, and the same is true of other parts. When reading these passages one feels that one cannot see the wood for the trees; the work becomes to some extent a reference work, and as such will be immensely useful, as are all the comparable collections, such as Dahlmann-Walitz and Meinel. Many of the chronicles and memoirs are unpublished, and Professor Cochrane's massive colla-

Especially important in this respect is Bowsky's observation that the terms used in government - Captain of the People, for instance - did not have a single, consistent meaning, and that in any case their meaning in Siena differed considerably from that elsewhere. The book thus provides an important warning against the assumption that the Italian commune had a standard form, and that all communes tended to evolve in a broadly similar way, from dominance by a feudal aristocracy through a guild-dominated phase to the despotism which the Nine held at bay. Bowsky stresses the lack of deep interest shown by the Sienese in the Guelf and pro-papal cause. Until the 1260s Siena had been renowned for its involvement in the Ghibelline cause and the defence of the claims of the Hohenstaufen. After the eclipse of the Hohenstaufen, Siena maintained a greater distance from the quarrels of popes and lay rulers; and, within the city, Guelfism never achieved the same significance as at Florence, where the Parte Guelfa came to form a powerful club of well-born citizens, able to exert considerable pressure on the city government.

Bowsky has valuable things to say on the political relationship between Siena and Florence. The view of Schevill and others, that Siena lived in a Florentine Guelf shadow, having lost much of its freedom of action after the defeat of the Hohenstaufen, is roundly condemned; Bowsky shows, with great sensitivity to Siena's foreign policy interest, how the city sought limited, attainable objectives within Tuscany and the Materno - above all, a southward extension of its authority, at the expense of the greater noble families in the countryside. He considers that the only "fantasy" generated by this outlook was an attempt to create a coastal base at Talomone, in the Maremma. Siena had good reason for its interest in this port: Sienese merchants were fairly ubiquitous by 1300, and producers of agricultural and industrial items would benefit from the creation of an outlet into the Mediterranean.

Bowsky lays bare the process whereby decisions were made that to foster Talomone were made. His discussion of the urban magistracies and of the exercise of justice is very

thorough; he also permits himself some delightful flights of fancy. Why, for instance, do the records of the city council discussions seem to indicate that rather little was actually said at meetings? (Later historians said it is true, transform the brief notes in the archives into great Thucydidean harangues.) Bowsky takes us into the Sala del Mappamondo in the Palazzo Comunale, to see where the meetings were held, and he insists that the chamber could only seat 300 comfortably, while at a full session there were supposed to be 500 or so present. "At a full session many members would either be crumpled together on benches or standing. What sort of debate would that allow? How easy would it be for the presiding officer to overlook a would-be speaker?" Perhaps Bowsky should visit the House of Commons to see how debate can indeed flourish in cramped conditions; but his basic point - about the real competence and importance of the city council as opposed to the magistracies - is a good one, reflecting his skill in depicting a medieval government at work.

Those looking for an explanation of Sienese successes in banking and trade will find Bowsky's book disappointing. When the Nine attained power, Sienese merchants could be well ensconced in Champagne, Sicily, Provence and even the Holy Land, but by 1300 Siena had ceded pre-eminence in banking to Florence. Bowsky shows clearly how concerned the Nine were to prevent arbitrary reprisals against Sienese merchants by foreign rulers who had a grievance against them. But what was the basis upon which Sienese commercial success was built? Siena was not a major centre of industry; water supplies were poor, and cloth producers, ever dependent on plentiful water, could not increase their output.

One area of commercial activity does attract Bowsky's close attention: Siena, unlike Florence, was more or less self-sufficient in food supplies, particularly after extensive tracts of the grain-growing Maremma came under its rule; by the late thirteenth century the city was frequently relaxing the official embargo on grain exports from its territory. Sometimes Siena provided grain to alleviate famines in Florence. Yet it



"Girl pouring water" by Domenico Ghirlandajo from Drawing in Early Renaissance Italy (1966p. Yale, £15. 0 300 02551 3), by Frances Ames-Lewis, to be reviewed soon.

is important to adopt a long perspective in assessing its position: as early as 1258 and 1271 it was importing grain from Sicily, during shortages in Tuscany; by the end of the thirteenth century the population of Tuscany was reaching a new peak, and there was serious pressure on resources throughout the first half of the fourteenth century. There are indications of worry in Siena as early as 1300: Bowsky cites a measure of that year, decreeing that the magistrates would "arrange how and in what way grain of the churches and clerics of the city and contado and jurisdiction of Siena be brought and must be brought back to the city of Siena from their mills, farms and estates". By 1339, Bowsky makes clear, the city government was succeeding less regularly in its attempts to provision the town;

and a poorly provisioned state may well be a restless one.

Perhaps a more appropriate subtitle for this book than "Siena under the Nine" would have been "The Nine and Siena": the view provided is one from the windows of the Palazzo Comunale, and to a large extent Professor Bowsky's choice of material has been dictated by the government documents of the period. Precisely because it is based on a mass of rich material, assessed with fine judgment and weighty learning, the book will serve as an essential point of departure for future studies in Tuscan history. The publishers, too, are to be congratulated on a finely produced volume, embellished with several colour plates.

or France, save the rather different spread of chorographical studies (like Camden's *Britannia*) stemming from both medieval antecedents and given a humanist twist by Blondo in his *Italia Illustrata* and by Leandro Alberti's *Descrittione di tutta Italia*, a compilation which, like Montaigne, I have found more interesting than Cochrane evidently did. (Incidentally Alberti claimed to have actually seen the "forged Petrosus" etc., published by his fellow Dominican Nanni di Viterbo.) The student wishing to use this survey will do well to consult the index under towns.

And what conclusions does Cochrane draw from this truly monumental work? He is, naturally, seeking a dynamic which has led men to write (above all about events in their own day - as true of antiquity as of the Middle Ages) what later ages would regard as history. Here is one of his conclusions: "As historiography was stimulated by the restoration of independence in some cities of Italy, so at least in one other it was actually stimulated by the loss of independence"; and a few pages later we hear of one Pietro Torri, who "assured the history of the tiny Lombard town of Crema by tracing its foundation to the same flight of Roman nobles from the barbarians", which seems yet a third impulse.

What is of undoubted importance is that, in distinction from classical antiquity (which, I think, provided the most cases very different models to be copied or emulated), medieval and early modern writers were illiterate scribbles of poles on their family or native traditions regarding local heroes and myths, and occasionally

rising to the great works of Leonardo Bruni, Machiavelli and Guicciardini - the last two, it must be observed (like Fortescue in England and Comynes in France) politicians who had been pushed aside - brutally in Machiavelli's case - by new regimes who had no use for them.

For anyone concerned with historiography this work will remain for decades indispensable. Much of it is heavy going, especially because the author tries to mention every writer he has come across who falls within his definition of history; this excludes chronicles as such and makes the touchstone the new methodology. One would have wished for more discussion of biography (Abbot's lives, King's lives, the Golden Legend and so on) and for more allowance for the historian as an entertaining performer as well as a writer who aims at immortality. Some have nowadays entirely abandoned the last, lofty aim.

It is worth pondering why works of this magnitude are found so commonly in the United States, so rarely in Britain. Is it because university presses there are better funded, because university teachers have more time for research of a detailed and prolonged kind, or that they attend fewer conferences? None of these explanations seems at all adequate. In particular the American professor is usually a very hard-worked creature. One begins to suspect that publishers there are more cautious and would hesitate to take the risk of producing so handsome a tome, and that English university staff are lazier. There may be virtue in "putting off" or "putting on".

The Vatican observed

By Peter Hebblethwaite

FRANCIS XAVIER MURPHY:
The Papacy Today
269pp. Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
£8.95.
0 297 77857 9

The Papacy Today, inevitably, is not about the papacy today. It is about the popes of the twentieth century. For the initiated it contains an excellent joke. Francis X. Murphy, as is well known, contributed importantly to the four books on the Second Vatican Council (1962-65) based on articles published in the New Yorker. The books were assigned to an unknown author called "Xavier Rynne". Fr. Murphy has always denied most strenuously that he "was" Xavier Rynne (possibly in some casual sense, for he has been, after all, a professor of moral theology). Rynne happens to be his mother's maiden name. The joke is that in his most recent book he lavishes praise on his other ego, X. Rynne is described as "a perspicacious commentator on Vatican events", an advanced theologian ranking with Hans Küng and Yves Congar, and his books remain "as relevant and as pertinent as ever". When one discovers in *The Papacy Today* passages lifted bodily from *Letters from Vatican City* one can only conclude that Fr. Murphy has either plagiarized Rynne or finally broken cover.

Though Fr. Murphy concedes that his book is "in the nature of a journalistic analysis", he also claims that it has "deeper pretensions". Yet it is the journalistic tone that prevails. This is sad. It is high time that Vaticanology was recognized as a serious field of historical inquiry. Even though the archives have not yet been opened, much of the evidence is public knowledge and much can be winkled out.

One effect of the journalistic approach is that no character may be introduced into the story without a colourful epithet. Cardinal Domenico Tardini appears as a "hard-nosed Roman" who exerts "iron-fisted control" and who is said to have been "shrewd, almost omniscient". I doubt it. Among the motley crew of hardline, intransigent cardinals with their "henchmen", it is a pleasure to come upon the rare "peace-making philosopher" (Rosmini), various "forward-looking thinkers" and the "liberalized Jesuit Cardinal Augustin Bea". Not one of these epithets throws any real light on the person it is applied to. But they tell us what Fr. Murphy thinks, and when to say good or bad.

Another defect of the journalistic method is that, since no sources are given, one never knows whether any of it is true. Did Pius XII really confide in a "European diplomat", "Après tout le déluge"? Who was the diplomat? When was this said? What did it mean? Was it an expression of supreme irresponsibility or of baffled resignation? There are rather too many of these let-me-tell-you-a-secret anecdotes. Here is one from the year 1878. It concerns Pope Leo XIII. "Only a few hours after his election he told an intimate collaborator: 'I intend to carry out a great policy. And the use of it, instead of the papal "we" was not lost on his shrewd observer. I must confess that it is rather lost on me. It must be rather difficult to start saying "we" when you mean "I". In any case a shrewd observer ought to have been more interested in what the great project was, and how it was to be realized. As it stands, the "revelation" is meaningless."

Too often Fr. Murphy rewrites didactic material (borrowed from Rynne) when new evidence is available. For example, there is a touching description of Pius XII's death on February 9, 1958, the eve of the tenth anniversary of the Lateran Pacts. He died at five am, notes Fr. Murphy, "talking with him the content of those two discourses, which remain a mystery to this day". But there is no longer much mystery about Pius XII's last moments. John Cornwell, in *The Pope Who Wasn't* (1979), has discovered the manuscript which

in the pope's quivering hand. They show that Pius XII was preparing his most vigorous attack on Nazism and Fascism. As his *novissimum verbum* they have great importance.

Fr. Murphy repeats the hoary story that the idea of holding a Synod of the diocese of Rome before the Council was proposed by Cardinal Domenico Tardini. Pope John's "hard-nosed" and conservative Secretary of State, it was a stalling tactic, designed to put off the Council until the old pope died (which could not long be delayed). This fits in with the "good pope" thesis that has been widely propounded. But it is exactly the opposite of the truth. It was Pope John who wanted the Roman Synod: he was inspired by the example of Radin Tedeschi, the Bishop whose secretary had been, and by his historical studies. As Patriarch of Venice he held a Synod. This revealed his "constitutional" sense. And the Curia opposed a Synod for the diocese of Rome, not out of perversity, but on the logical grounds that a Synod would be quickly made out of date by the subsequent Council. On this point, the Curia was

right and Pope John was wrong. But that is an awful possibility never envisaged here.

This becomes crystal clear when Fr. Murphy informs us: "Those who search in [Pope John's] *Journal of a Soul* for the paradigm of his anarchic approach to much of the Church's tradition... are looking in the wrong place. Instead they should look at the short speech he gave on accepting the papacy. *Transitus* on the little matter of his alleged "anarchic approach to much of the Church's tradition", which is nonsense. It seems obvious that Roncalli's papacy grew out of the experience that was so scrupulously and painfully recorded in the *Journal of a Soul*. To suggest otherwise is to make the man unintelligible. He did not change on becoming pope; on the contrary, becoming pope enabled him to become himself. Another and more careful reading of the *Journal of a Soul* would show that, despite the conventional Counter-Reformation piety, there are intimations of his future thinking. They come mostly in a preface for images of growth: the Church as a flourishing garden rather than a dusty museum; its perennially

renewable youthfulness; "signs of the times", and above all the idea of a "New Pentecost" (first mentioned in a sermon in Istanbul in 1942). But the reason why these continuities have been overlooked - apart from home-work not done - is that they would upset the media picture of Pope John as the one who "turned the Church upside down and inside out" and who "propelled it into the late twentieth century".

Like most reporters, Fr. Murphy is at his best where he has firsthand sources. It was always something of a mystery how he laid hands on the elected Pope John Paul I in August 1978. At the time he attributed this knowledge to the semedious of Italian cardinals "who seemed anxious to let the world know how they had chosen the Church's latest Pontifex Maximus" (*Newsweek*, September 11, 1978). The explanation offered here is subtly different. The indiscretions came not from within the conclave but from the octogenarian cardinals who, though excluded, hastened to find out what had happened and were not bound by any oath of secrecy. This is a

loophole which I would expect John Paul II to close.

Fr. Murphy's account of this pontificate is largely a summary of travelogue speeches, mostly without the context that would interpret them. Now and again, the "good guy" bantering by the Curia (this is applied most inappropriately. Here, for example, is Fr. Murphy's comment on John Paul's first encyclical, *Redemptio Humana*: "He pleated with extravagant terminology and idiosyncratic doctrinal turns, 18,000 word document gusted forth in vigorous waves of language that gave the Vatican Congregation for the Doctrine of Faith fits, as its scribes endeavoured to pull it into shape and cope with its theological content." Xavier Rynne would have told us, at least, what these "idiosyncratic doctrinal turns" were, and not have had Roman Congregation going into his unless he could be sure that the man had actually been submitted to it (for which there is no evidence). But this uninformative sentence is meant to give the impression that this spotaneously fellow is being curbed by the Curia. Xavier Rynne knew better than that. It is time to bring him back.

Faith in poetry

By Ian Ker

JOHN COULSON:
Religion and Imagination
In aid of a grammar of assent
193pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £12.50.
0 19 826656 1

John Coulson's new book explores, often very illuminatingly, the relationship between literature and religion, with its implications for faith and belief. He begins by defining imagination as "a particular kind of cognitive perception", which "has as its object a new sense of reality"; in particular, it "predisposes us to believe in what it has realized". And so atheism is seen as "essentially a failure of imaginative feeling". The language of Scripture, like that of Shakespeare and the Metaphysical poets, is characterized by a "density of metaphor", where content is inseparable from form, and where paraphrase and translation are inadequate. This sensibility of feeling and thought in unison can be found in a preacher like Lancelot Andrewes, but it ends with the eighteenth century and the "dissociation of sensibility".

Coulson maintains that in spite of the "dissociation of sensibility", a theology of the imagination did survive into the nineteenth century, principally in Coleridge and Newman. Religious belief originates in the imagination and its verification depends upon its being made credible to the imagination. Newman's first distinction was between "notional" and "imaginative" not "real" assent. The object of faith, however, has to be experienced as real. Newman's acute awareness of the complexities of religious language and the dangers of over-emphasizing the literal meaning, and likewise his understanding of doctrinal development as a growth in imaginative response, show his affinity to the world of literature.

Coulson believes that the plight of religious faith in a secularized society is bound up with the "divorce of religion from imagination", and he deplores "the determination throughout certain persistent forms of religious imagination with simple 'loss of faith'". He argues that this hardly does justice to the last ten willing unbeliever of writers like George Eliot, Arnold and Hardy.

It is T. S. Eliot who proves in *Four Quartets* that it is still possible to believe "without compromising the integrity of his imagination". And here it is most refreshing to arrive at some analysis and discussion after over a hundred pages of rather generalized paraphrase and

comment. The relation between faith and poetry, the question of the status of religious poetry, are of great importance for Coulson's case. Does Eliot's poetry, as Leavis claimed, grow weaker as its religious explicitness grows? Coulson argues that

Eliot's explicit religious statement seems... to depend upon a prior negation and diffusion of clichés, even "orthodox" conceptions, so that, where the religious significance is most explicit, it is often most contested... And what seems to be bound up with this... is the recurring effort to achieve (by discussing it) linguistic integrity.

But he admits "a critical difficulty" with certain key passages in *Little Gidding*, where the explicitness cannot be defended in the same way. Coulson's answer to the general problem is that "if the subject-matter of religious poetry is accepted

as necessarily and already defined theologically, then religious explicitness does weaken poetry "since the range of feeling and imagination is by definition already delimited to ornamental theological truths by declaratory ode or hymns". Is this really the only possibility? Does Dante, for example, whom Coulson has earlier approved of, suffer as a poet from an "over-confident religious explicitness of belief"? As it stands, without much more definition and elaboration, Coulson's argument is unconvincing.

Coulson is at home in both literary criticism and theology, so that he can draw many stimulating connections and parallels especially between Newman and Eliot. But he does not altogether escape the danger of forcing analogies, as, for instance, on page 61 where two separate quotations from Newman, one on the unity of the pre-Reformation Church and the other on the lives of the saints, are

torn out of context to prove the Newman believed in "communities in which imaginative convictions could be authenticated". This kind of academic perience is far removed from the prose of Newman and Eliot, and indeed very unlike their rich concreteness of language which is so extolled in this book.

A certain amount of *Religion and Imagination* seems to have been hurriedly written, which may account for several curious failures to identify quotations and references. There is lack of clarity, at more than one level, even though some of the striking obscurities could easily have been removed - for example, the sudden elevation (at quite an important point in the argument) of J. Z. Mozley from a footnote on page 21 to the main body of the text on page 22. There are shafts of sunlight in this study; but there are also pockets of mist, if not fog, which never quite disperse.

Doctrine defended

By Don Cupitt

A.T. HANSON and R.F.C. HANSON:
Reasonable Belief
A Survey of the Christian Faith
283pp. Oxford University Press. £8.50
(paperback, 13.95).
0 19 213235 0

Roman Catholics believe that a good and all-powerful God controls all events, frequently granting miraculous healings in answer to prayer; and they hold that the papacy has a special place in God's purposes. Yet when the Pope was shot in May 1980 nobody suggested that religious action to influence supernatural power would be enough to heal him; on the contrary, he was whisked into hospital without hesitation, to receive the best that secular, science-based medicine could provide. The faithful prayed in their millions, and the doctors loyally declared that it was only by divine providence that the bullet had missed the spinal column, but the impression remained that even for such exalted circles religious belief no longer provides the most powerful system of explanation and remedial action available in a crisis. Medical science was in charge, and religion could only watch, wait, and provide a kind of symbolic topping-up.

The episode illustrates the great issue in religious thought today. Since the Enlightenment religious belief has been in rapid change, and many conceptions, once thought descriptively true, are today seen as symbolic or mythological. How far has this process

now gone? Do religious beliefs still describe facts, propose explanatory theories, and prescribe courses of action that are objectively efficacious; or is true religion now purely attitudinal, expressive and action-guiding, its former descriptive elements having been discarded as superstitious? Philosophers of religion cannot agree among themselves, because the Church itself is inconsistent. Its official language is still realist, but its actual practice has long been expressivist. Theologians are caught in the same inconsistency, professing realism even as they show how historical, philosophical and sociological criticism has irresistibly whittled away the old descriptive content of religious beliefs. Theology is on the verge of breaking through to a purified, non-realistic account of religion but, for reasons to do with the politics of faith, hesitates upon the brink.

These reflections are prompted by the Hanson's new one-volume theology. Anthony and Richard Hanson are senior Anglican theologians, grounded in the orthodox of a generation ago but also strongly committed to the critical method. Their intentions are certainly realist. They expressly set aside Christian ethics, and (less consciously) also omit consideration of religion in the sense of piety, spirituality, mystical theology and the awesome Kierkegaardian problem of "becoming a Christian". Their view of Christianity is traditional in concentrating on doctrine - God, Christ, the Spirit, the Trinity - and the institutional Church. It is objectified and theological, Christian almost without religion and ethics. Christianity as the Church, its

teaching and its powers.

Yet the Hansons' resolute critical truthfulness in describing the development of doctrine and proposing visions continually leads them away from dogmatic realism. They are not philosophically minded, but the philosophical issues continually obtrude. What, for instance, can be the meaning of asserting the "real" presence of Christ's body and blood in the Eucharist, when every normal test of something's real presence is expressed precluded? Surely, they say, the Eucharist must be described as a symbolic means whereby we receive Christ's life but does not mean it. The effect that it is a ritual commitment of ourselves to that complex of religious and moral values to live by which is to live in Christ?

The Hansons' critical conscience leads them to say that "Jesus did not claim to be God, did not believe that he was God". Their own reconstruction of the doctrine of the Incarnation begins from the principle that "Jesus was a fully human being; there was nothing supernatural about him", and they speak of him as a man so open to God as to make God known. No sense of natural descent need be supposed. It is this within an act of saying that God is the religious ideal of spiritual perfection that is seen as embodied in Christ?

The Hansons' manner is robustly confident, and they sharply criticize what they call "reductionism". Yet at the same time they cannot help to show some of the reasons why reductionism is almost without exception the present dominant in theology. The book is clearly written and clearly packed

Travelling scholars

By Roland Oliver

NEHEMIA LEVITZON and J. F. P. HOPKINS (Editors):
Corpus of Early Arabic Sources for West African History
484pp. Cambridge University Press.
£35.
0 521 22422 5

From the eighth century onwards, the Muslim townsfolk of North Africa were well aware that fifty stages away across the desert to the south lay a land inhabited by black people which was the source of gold, ivory and slaves. It was no mere rumour stemming from occasional journeys of special daring, as it had been in the time of Herodotus. For the Muslims,

the black slaves were in their midst as labourers and soldiers, servants and concubines. And soon the passing caravans began to be swelled by black students and pilgrims, showing that the religion and civilization of Islam were spreading across the Sahara into the western and central Sudan.

There is thus nothing new or surprising in the idea that the main sources for the medieval history of West Africa are to be found in Arabic writings. As long ago as 1905, Flora Lugard, the wife of the pioneer administrator of northern Nigeria, and herself a former Colonial Editor of *The Times*, wrote an attractive book called *A Tropical Dependency*, based partly on these sources. In 1933, this was succeeded by an even more delightful work, *Caravans of the Old Sahara*, by

E. W. Bovill, a talented amateur historian, who made extensive use of the existing translations of Arabic writings. When the first professional historians of Africa began to emerge in the 1950s, high hopes were expressed that there was a mine capable of much further exploitation. Professor J. D. Fage, who was then developing a history department at the newly founded University of Ghana, raised a small fund to encourage an Arabist scholar to survey the untranslated literature and to re-edit, where necessary, the texts already available in translation. In a sense the volume now edited by Nehemia Levitzon and J. F. P. Hopkins is the result of that initiative, which it has taken a quarter of a century to achieve, although further financial assistance has come from Unesco,

and the book now appears as part of the Arabic series in the *Pontes Historiae Africanae* sponsored by the International Academic Union.

The difficulties to be overcome have been formidable, and most of them have stemmed from the nature of the sources themselves. For example, of the sixty-five authors represented, only one, the indefatigable Ibn Bututa, actually crossed the Sahara and spent some months in the Kingdom of Mali. All the rest wrote to some degree from hearsay, although that could mean at one end of the spectrum, a historian of genius like Ibn Khaldun or al-Orni recording the statements of named and identified witnesses, and at the other end some mindless compiler of an encyclopaedia or a biographical dictionary copying out verbatim the statements of earlier writers. In general, Muslim authors liked to take the whole of the known world for their canvas, and their information about Africa amounted to a very small part of the whole. In these circumstances African names, whether personal or topographical, when acquired orally and then rendered into an alphabet composed basically of consonants, give rise to special difficulties, only a small proportion of which can be resolved by comparing variant readings in different manuscripts.

The result achieved by Dr Hopkins, who is an Arabist linguist from Cambridge, and Professor Levitzon, an Arabist historian of Africa from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, is beyond praise. Here, in 372 pages of clear English translations, is the sum of what Islamic scholars wrote about West Africa between the ninth and the fifteenth centuries, together with the notes necessary to its evaluation and the detailed indexes and glossaries which facilitate comparative use. In all these ways it is markedly superior to its French rival, the *Recueil des sources arabes concernant l'Afrique occidentale*, published by J. M. Cuoq in 1975.

If at the end of the day one must admit to a certain feeling of disappointment, this is certainly not with the editors, but with the Muslim authors whose work they present, because these had access to so much information and recorded so little of it. A huge proportion of what they wrote concerns the minutiae of desert travel, and the affairs of the Berber camel pastoralists upon whom trans-Saharan communications depended. To be sure, these pastoralists included the Almoravids, whose conquest of North Africa and Spain has given them an assured place in world history. But when it comes to the Sudanic peoples who created the empires of Ghana, Mali, Songhay, Kanem and Bornu, and many smaller states, the record of the Muslim authors, though very much better than nothing, is nevertheless woefully deficient. They describe the show business of court ceremonial, but entirely neglect the mechanics of government. They refer to the long-distance trade conducted by expatriates, but not to the extensive network of internal trade of which it was an outgrowth. They knew nothing of military affairs, or of the relations of the great states with their lesser neighbours. One is constantly reminded how much of our real knowledge of the medieval history of the western and central Sudan comes from the introductory and retrospective chapters of the chronicles written by native Sudanese scholars from the sixteenth century on.

Nevertheless, the work of Levitzon and Hopkins had to be done, and will never need to be done again. Only its grotesque price will prevent it from reaching the shelves of the teachers of West African history for whom it was designed. If the Unesco *General History of Africa* can be subsidised to sell at £12.50, a volume why not this one?

Imperfect brothers

By Jonathan Riley-Smith

STEPHEN HOWARTH:
The Knights Templar
321pp. Collins. £9.95.
0 00 216452 3

More bad books have been written about the history of the Templars than good ones. The superficial glamour of the brothers, the supposed mystery surrounding them and the extraordinary accusations made at the time of their suppression tend to bring out the worst in popular writers. Academic historians, on the other hand, are discouraged by the absence of crucial material - the bulk of the documents relating to the Order's activities in Palestine and Syria have not survived or, at least, have not yet been rediscovered - and by the fundamental dullness of Templar history after the first fifty years, when the Order did set some interesting precedents in monastic history. The training the Templars gave their recruits was more or less guaranteed to produce an immaturity of outlook and hinder intellectual development, and the brothers appear to have been rather inadequate when faced with what was admittedly severe pressure from the French government in the years leading to their suppression shows. Historians of religion and religious orders have not found them very interesting.

It can be said in Stephen Howarth's favour that he has become enamoured of only one really dubious idea: that which links the Templars with the Shroud of Turin. But he has written a bad book, which is full of errors of fact. The Hospital in Jerusalem was not founded as early as 1048. The word *presul*, fairly commonly used of a bishop, is treated by the author, who has clearly only read the first line of the entry in Lewis and Short, as an insult. Patriarch Gormond of Jerusalem appears as Gaston, the "twin castles" of Gaston and Bagbaris are in reality one, Gaston was the western name for Baghdad. The castle of Montfort which gave the Templars control of Upper Galilee actually belonged to the Teutonic Knights. The papal bull *Omnia Datum Optimum*, although important and early, was not without precedent, and did have parallels, since it was only one of several similar charters of privileges granted to religious orders. St George was not regarded as the patron saint of England in the 1400s. 5,000 Templars could not have been arrested in France in 1307; there were only 5,000 Templars in the world and the number arrested, using the widest definition of membership, would have been no more than 500.

I have given here only a selection of the mistakes with which the book is littered and which, like the overwilling, suggest that it was hurriedly produced. The errors lie embedded in layers of erroneous interpretation. It is clear that the author has not read enough. Had he consulted all the better recent works on the Templars he would have known that it is by no means certain that their foundation was greeted with the euphoria he describes, and had he read up-to-date work on the history of the kingdom of Jerusalem he would not have given a poor reflection of the state of scholarship thirty years ago, before it was transformed.

What appears to be carelessness and inadequate research are not, however, the only problems. The author seems to have little feel for the Middle Ages and to assume that individuals eight hundred years ago were much less complicated and impenetrable than men today. He oversimplifies nearly everything, with the result that he sometimes caricatures of reality, sometimes merely confusing. Any first-year undergraduate who presented the simplistic and sometimes garbled pages that appear here on the Cathars, Frederick II, Philip IV and the Inquisition would be in danger of being sent down. A blindness to medieval thought and feelings, unfortunate in someone who is fond of describing the ideas in his characters' heads and of painting word-pictures of crowd reactions, is

compounded by what appears to be hostility towards the medieval Church. Of course one does not have to be sympathetic to the Church of Rome to understand the Middle Ages - some of the greatest medieval historians were definitely not - but criticism of medieval Catholicism ought at least to be informed, whereas the author seems to be shaky on Church history and Catholic beliefs. He does not seem to know of the limitations canon law set on the use of force. He states that "the Cathars claimed, with truth, that their services were far closer to those of the first Christians than any in the Church of Rome". He appears to assume that Catholics would treat Pope Clement V's suppression of the Templars as an exercise in papal infallibility.

The best thing about this book is the cover, which is attractive. I cannot understand how a reputable publishing house, which has the resources to get a typescript of this sort checked by a professional, could be so ignorant of its contents that it could state in the blurb that the author "cuts through myths and legends, and sets out the true historical facts".

Beauty and power

By Patricia Crone

H. ST. JOHN PHILBY:
The Queen of Sheba
141pp. Quartet. £12.50.
0 7043 2246 3

The Queen of Sheba needs no introduction; nor, one presumes, does H. St. John Philby, the famed explorer of Arabia, friend of Ibn Saud and father of the spy. Their appearance together in public so many years after their demise does invite a certain curiosity, which Gerald de Gaury's introduction does nothing to satisfy, and the lavish illustrations with which the book is provided at first sight suggest that the thirty-year old manuscript was hailed out as an excuse for yet another Arabian coffee-table book. In fact, however, the book has not only beautiful pictures, but also an argument.

Its subject is the Queen of Sheba in Islamic legend. Behind the legend, Philby argues, there are three historical figures. The first is the biblical queen, who was not a south, but a north Arabian ruler; a view which today many hold. The second, that she was a later south Arabian queen or princess called Bilqis whom, in Philby's view, Muslim exegetes and story-tellers, wrongly identified as Solomon's vision. The existence of such a lady is somewhat harder to accept; the name Bilqis is almost certainly derived from the Hebrew word for "concubine"; the Queen of Sheba was Solomon's concubine in rabbinical legend, and had Philby

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Magnificent and expensull

By Jane Glover

ROBERT DONINGTON:
The Rise of Opera
399pp. Faber. £15.
0 571 1674 4

The gradual evolution of opera is one of the most complex developments in the history of music. Many accounts exist of the early experiments in combining music and drama in sixteenth-century Italian courts; but hitherto nobody has, in a single volume, investigated the philosophical, intellectual and artistic background to this major event, and then seen it through to the end of the seventeenth century. Robert Donington's task was therefore formidable, but he has executed it with admirable clarity, a strong classical bias, and an exhaustive if argumentative thoroughness.

Donington begins his account with an extensive exploration of the philosophical background, that is of Neoplatonism, which he pursues through Dante and Boccaccio, the fifteenth-century Florentine groups and the pastoral dramas of Poliziano and Guarini, in the sixteenth-century Florentine academies. Defining the essence of Neoplatonism as the artistic "veil which half conceals, deeper meanings than its surface show", he illuminatingly relates this philosophical background to the first halting operatic experiments.

Turning to the attempts of the sixteenth-century intellectual groups in Florence to restore music to its classical function of arousing and guiding strong emotion, Donington makes several interesting points. The first is the contribution made by rivalry, even animosity, towards artistic achievement. Rivalries existed between Jacopo Corsi and Giovanni de' Bardi, the leaders of two of the foremost academies in late sixteenth-century Florence; between Jacopo Peri and Giulio Caccini, the two main singer-composers of their circles, culminating in the publication of their respective settings of Rinuccini's libretto *Euridice*; and between Florence itself and its neighbouring courts, notably that of the Gonzaga at Mantua. However expending all these rivalries may have seemed at the time, or entering into them as they appear to us now, they were ultimately of the greatest artistic significance. For although an art-form may have a firm basis of idealism and philosophy, in the long run it survives because of the desire of its practitioners to excel. And if, by healthy competition, excellence additionally means doing something better than somebody else, the product is likely to be subject to constant improvement, increased flair, and sharper detail. Caccini's need to better Peri (even to the extent of making the outrageous claim that what Peri had achieved he himself had done "years before"), and Mantua's determination to improve upon Florentine court-spectacles, all contributed strongly to the concentrated activity which brought opera to what Donington calls "The Threshold", and then established it as a permanent art form.

What slightly debases this healthy competition, in terms of final artistic results, is an almost inevitable element of self-consciousness. As Donington shows, an art form aimed at restoring the classical relationship of music and drama, preoccupied with the brilliant new device of monody, and in addition performed by those who created it, must have a certain amount of self-consciousness of self-promotion, even of self-congratulation. This partly accounts for the fact that those first operas of Peri and Caccini, however important historically, are in the long run musically unspectacular. In displaying their own vocal expertise alongside their own monodic recitative, Peri and Caccini disregarded the prime operatic necessity, that of simply telling a good story. Opera needed composers who could not only write good recitative and aria and aria, but who could make the most varied and dramatic narrative, in

was this talent in Claudio Monteverdi, coupled with his own assurance and consequent lack of self-consciousness, that elevated opera from something experimental to something lasting. Peri's *Euridice* (1600) is a milestone; but Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (1607) is a masterpiece.

A year after *Orfeo*, Monteverdi's *Arianna* was performed in Mantua, and several chroniclers reported that the audience was moved to tears at Arianna's celebrated lament. This, it seems, was another turning-point. For the spectators were now reacting, not to the half-veiled truths of the Neoplatonic implications of the libretto, but as human beings spontaneously react to a particular predicament. And it is here that I begin to relate how, almost immediately, the high mythological and allegorical ideals of the early intellectuals became diluted by the sympathetic interest of a straightforward human story. A period of indifferent libretto-writing ensued, which, as Donington reports, the seventeenth-century historian G. B. Doni attributed to the "lack of a Rinuccini". Comic elements began to be introduced, and as early as 1618 in Landi's *La Morte d'Orfeo*, opera was already seen to be parodying itself.

Donington's account of this shift of emphasis raises a very important question. Had opera set its sights too high? Could it bear the weight of all the serious allegorical and philosophical responsibilities bestowed on it by its intellectual formulators? The suggestion that it could not, here surely, is that it could not. The function of opera was now moving from the noble ideals of its infancy towards pure entertainment on three equal levels: musical, visual and dramatic. It is increasingly apparent that the Neoplatonic element disappears almost as soon as the operatic form has established itself. Thus, however much Donington may seek a Neoplatonic interpretation or explanation of the form, he is in fact tracing a Neoplatonic inference, the development of the form was now so commercial, and later in Venice so commercial, that its creators really had only one aim: to give immediate pleasure to an immediate audience. Another *Arianna* must evoke more tears; astonishment at mechanical and scenic effects must be sustained. It was surely this heady commercialism, designed to meet the voracious demands of consumers, which accounted for opera scores not being published. It was not, as Donington suggests, lack of incentive. Music was simply no time, nor any point: last year's opera was as stale as last year's news.

There seems, then, to be a certain lack of proportion in the book, however stimulating the insights of its first part. Having dealt with the origins of the form, Donington goes on to describe the works themselves, some in great detail (Monteverdi's *Orfeo*, Cavalli's *Orlando*, Lully's *Amadis*), from the point of view of plot-content and the emerging musical forms. But he rather neglects the new motivation of composers, librettists and designers: that of pleasing the audience on their three equal levels. The visual aspect is dealt with in barely sufficient detail, despite the beguiling plates of set-designs and illustrations, and an account of the Italian designer's success when opera was taken to France. As to the contribution of librettists, Donington ignores the increasing disillusionment, even despair, of individual librettists from as early as 1650, as opera predated at the expense of their own. He ignores too the depths of complex absurdity to which plots sank as librettists took a back seat. And there is little mention of the visual and musical ingredients of the libretto, and of course its function to one of party with its musical and visual partners.

The musical developments, on the other hand, are clearly charted; the emergence of the now forms arising from the popularity of indi-

vidual singers, whose own techniques, vanities and reputations demanded them. But Donington should perhaps have taken more notice of the aesthetic move away from the voice and towards instruments, at the end of the seventeenth century. He refers to "brilliantly exciting instrumental passages-work" in Scarlatti's *Telemaco* (1718), without alluding to the huge shift of musical emphasis of which such string-writing was a part. Just as the seventeenth century had concentrated almost entirely on evolving and strengthening vocally dominated forms (opera, oratorio, cantata, motet), so the eighteenth century was to see the supremacy of instrumentally dominated forms (symphony, concerto, string quartet). The merging of one into the other was already reflected in the operas of the late seventeenth century.

Though Donington is strong on the philosophical background to opera, his discussions of the actual music reveal some weaknesses. The book includes twenty-two musical examples, or sets of examples, of which fourteen are from Monteverdi's *Orfeo* (including a parallel with Purcell's *Dido*), two from Monteverdi's *Poppea*, one from *Arianna*, three from Peri (both *Dafne* and *Euridice*) and one from Lully's *Amadis*. Even allowing for the fact that Donington considers *Orfeo* as his "central study", and indeed gives a highly detailed account of it complete with explanations of its allegorical and musical content, the distribution of the musical examples seems disproportionate. Later opera, like *Orlando*, are also considered in some detail, but without a quantity of illustration. There is consequently a certain dedicated quality which is often second-hand at that. This practice of adding arbitrary padding to a perfectly presentable frame is not only superfluous in the context, but negates the whole improvisatory splendour of early opera, which Donington rightly applauds at such length. In a quotation from Act Two of *Orfeo*, for example, he beseeches such a fussy keyboard accompaniment on the entry of the Messenger that he destroys the "sudden stillness" of the moment to which he refers in his text. Similarly his keyboard accompaniment to the excerpt from the *Lamento d'Arianna* seems to confine the music rather than liberate it in the manner of *stile recitativo*. It is the essence of this music that the impetus comes always from the words, and the way they are set, not from some superimposed accompaniment.

Occasionally when Donington is describing historical events or developments of which documentation is not always readily accessible, he draws his own speculative conclusions and presents them as if they were proven facts. There are therefore some rather surprising errors. Donington states that the Teatro S. Moisè in Venice seated "only about 800 persons" and was "considered very small". Small it may have been in comparison with the court theatres in Rome or Paris, but in Venice this was large. Other theatres in the city, often converted from warehouses, held considerably fewer than 800 people; and indeed this factor positively influenced the development of mid-seventeenth-century Venetian opera, for the intimate relationship between stage and audience encouraged concentration upon the solo singer. Again, in his discussion of the instrumental forces employed in these Venetian theatres, Donington displays the striking evidence of recited payments to players: "Three keyboard players, one person unspecified for a revival of Cavalli's *Cro* in 1665", Donington claims. "These forces are much too small artistically for the size of pit and auditorium found in the larger Venetian theatres, and I see no reason for not enlarging them with historical possibilities now." Three keyboard instruments and two lutes, used in a

variety of combinations, provided ample and contrasting support for most of the music; single strings merely added colour in *ritornellos* or played sifonists to cover scene changes. It was the nature of opera of this period to concentrate on the solo voice, and not to confuse its ascendancy by larger instrumental sounds.

In his later discussions of French opera, and its differences from the Italian models, Donington is again somewhat confusing. He states that "The flexibility of French recitative is to some extent actually notated by very frequent changes of time signature...". Some Italian composers... used similar changes of time signature in recitative; but this drop-out of later Italian recitative, becoming by then a distinction of the French idiom. In fact the French measuring of recitative into a complicated succession of 3/4, 4/4 and 2/2 bars represents the single but crucial difference (apart from the sound of the actual language) between French and Italian recitative. Each inflection of each word was minutely observed by Lully and his followers, thus giving absolute clarity to the text but allowing the performer little freedom. No Italian composer ever put such restrictions on his singers. If Cavalli (whom Donington cites) changed his time-signature during the course of a recitative, it was always to accommodate a general change of mood, not to observe a specific change of metre. Italian composers could be remarkably flexible within the common-time signature, and thus retained the clarity of text without issuing rigid instructions to performers.

Donington's style is academic, but agreeably so: engrossing, demanding, at times almost impenetrable, but always lively, and with a ready dash of wit. Occasionally his impulse to categorize and define seems redundant. His definition of *stile recitativo* as "a form of vocal melody essentially for one singer, standing on a modulating harmonic bass which supports a subordinate instrumental accompaniment; and composed for the explicit purpose of expressing as faithfully and as vividly as possible a more or less dramatic verbal text" is frankly cumbersome. And in his discussions of the various musical-dramatic spectacles presented in

Florence around the turn of the seventeenth century, he is hazy in such definitions as "certainly not an oratorio", or "a musical morality on the borderline of opera". At its formative juncture in the history of opera, the very profession itself was with subtly changing ingredients nearly defies definition, as Donington himself shows by quoting a letter from the singer Francesco Rasi to his employer about the rehearsal for "this marvellous pastoral or fable or whatever I should call it". (And this engaging quotation is untypical as ascribed to a source.)

But elsewhere Donington's digressions are delightful, for example when he observes that, after being his employer's opera, the highest standards began to rise almost immediately, "after the royal fashion of human endeavour". He chides Alfred Einstein, none too gently, for the term "pseudo-monody" when he actually means "quasi-monody", and in a footnote, takes Patrick J. Smith to task for the title of his book *The Tenor Music*. One might almost dare to retort and query Donington's use of the word "insightful" in two separate footnotes; or, more seriously, reproach him for his use of the familiar mistranslation of Dante's famous line as "Abandon hope all ye who enter here".

In general, though, the book is as excellently presented as is the argument. There is one serious misprint: the date of the Barberis' return from France to Rome was 1653, not 1553 as given on page 274; and there is a curious transposition in a footnote whereby James R. Anthony, author of *French Baroque Music*, appears as Anthony R. James. (He is correctly named in the bibliography.) The copious footnotes confirm the enormous range of Professor Donington's researches and knowledge, and the bibliography is likewise a formidable compendium of related reading matter. This is unquestionably an important book, thoroughly enlightening in its earlier parts, and cheerfully provocative in its latter part. It is indispensable reading for any serious student of the history of music, and a most magnificent and expensull diversion for the Wit of Man can invent.

Classical absolutes

By A. J. Krallshelmer

ALBERT COOK:

French Tragedy: The Power of Enactment
244pp. Ohio University Press. £9.
8040 0548 6

Anyone who now writes on Corneille and Racine has to justify the enterprise by offering genuinely new insights into the works of France's two best-known tragic dramatists, otherwise he will simply be repeating the obvious, perhaps with new words, or just getting things wrong. Albert Cook's words - displacement, ambivalence - are not new, though his style is certainly not classical, but some of his formulations are not enough usefully to stimulate thought. He says, for instance, that our composer is evoked by the absoluteness of the situation in which Racine's characters are placed, our *terrore* by its limitations. He gives good examples of lines, couplets and whole scenes, each constituting what he calls a *plenum*, constituted by what follows, thus creating a sense of irony. His analysis of the vocabulary of certain speeches is very well done, and even a beginner would profit from it.

Unfortunately the dread hand of Lucien Goldmann (and others) weighs on some of his interpretations of *Athalie*, and apart from such in-felicities as "trans-Jansenistic" and

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Parallel perceptions

By Simon Hornblower

HUNTER R. RAWLINGS III:

The Structure of Thucydides' History
278pp. Guildford: Princeton University Press. £14.80.
0 691 03555 5

Thucydides was the first writer consciously to develop a theory of historical causation. His famous phrase the "truest cause" (of the Peloponnesian War), as opposed to the "publicly proclaimed differences" between Sparta and Athens, contains what for its time was an unusual thought, and to express it Thucydides uses unusual Greek: the *alēsthaiē* *prophasiai*. What is unusual is that we would expect *prophasiai* to mean pretext rather than real cause. The whole phrase occurs in only one other passage of classical Greek, near the beginning of Book VI of, again, Thucydides, at the point where the second Ten Years' War (415/404) begins.

Hunter Rawlings's earlier book was a study of the word *prophasiai*, and he has been led, by this and other parallels between Thucydides' explanation of the origin of the first

ten years of the Peloponnesian War (the so-called Archidamian War) and of the origin of the last ten years, which began with the Sicilian Expedition, to elaborate a detailed theory about the two wars. Some of the correspondences between them (like that mentioned above) had long been noticed; Rawlings's ingenious new book seeks to press the parallel in detail and to extremes. His thesis, then, is that there is conscious parallelism between Thucydides' first five books and the second five, designed to bring out a parallelism in the events they describe. Since Thucydides' History survives in eight books not ten, ie, he did not record the last years of the war at all, Rawlings has to use the other surviving sources (Xenophon, Diodorus) to guess what the two unwritten books would have been like. This is the most enjoyable part of his argument, partly because that sort of thing is always more fun anyway (like Sir Ronald Syme's reconstruction of the lost books of Tacitus), partly because Rawlings does it with panache.

He argues for the closest possible correspondences in structure between the two preparatory narratives, Book I and the first ninety-odd chapters of Book VI. (After that he

presses his argument less hard, ie, the Books III/VII parallelism is less, the Books III/VIII less still, and so on. He justifies this by observing that Thucydides had a freer hand to point up similarities when composing the necessarily more subjective introductory material than when shaping the narrative. But this undercuts the degree to which Thucydides' narrative is subjective, both in its emphasis and even in the choice of events narrated.) In Books I and VI the Cereyran and Corinthian pair of speeches are held to correspond to those of Nikias and Alcibiades, the Sicilian expedition is foreshadowed by the *perieklonetaia*, and so on. (Oddly, Rawlings misses the parallel judgments on Egyptian and Sicilian expeditions, both of which close with the words "few out of many returned".) Rawlings is not so crude as to ignore the real differences between the two wars, and he has a "heads-I-win-tails-you-lose" strategy to deal with the slogan "formal analogies may conceal real differences". This (it may be felt) does not so

much qualify the theory as cancel it.

In these two categories of passage, then, Rawlings tries to forestall disagreement. But what of passages where his theories require that there should be parallels, but the parallels are not obviously there? (Inevitably, such passages lead Rawlings to force the evidence. An example is the digression in Book VI on the Pisistratid tyrants, one object of which (Rawlings claims) is to illustrate, by an attack on Athenian misconceptions about the fall of the tyrants, the contempt which Thucydides had for hearsay evidence, a contempt made explicit in the famous chapter on method in Book I. This is unfortunate: the only occasion in all Thucydides where the historian himself calls to know something by hearsay is precisely in the Pisistratid digression in Book VI (at the beginning of Chapter 55, not noted by Rawlings). Nor is there much force in the now arguments offered for the old idea that the fall of the Pisistratids is intended as a comment on the recall of Alcibiades: Alcibiades' enemies are lower-class, so Rawlings needs to show that Aristogelon, who assassinated the Pisistratid Hipparchus, was lower-class too. This is supposed to be proved by the description of Aristogelon as one of the "middle citizens" of the noble part of the Gephyraioli, was indeed an inferior line, the phrase "middle citizens" is on the only other occasion it occurs in Thucydides, distinctly sympathetic (III, 82). It is not easy to see here "bitterness" (p 112) about Aristogelon.

And so on. One could multiply complaints about detail, and that would be a legitimate approach to a book of this sort, which starts from the agreed and the obvious and moves on to the concealed, the speculative, and the controversial. But the more entertaining sections are those on "books IX and X", ie, the reconstruction of the missing books. Con-

stantly, the book is as excellently presented as is the argument. There is one serious misprint: the date of the Barberis' return from France to Rome was 1653, not 1553 as given on page 274; and there is a curious transposition in a footnote whereby James R. Anthony, author of *French Baroque Music*, appears as Anthony R. James. (He is correctly named in the bibliography.) The copious footnotes confirm the enormous range of Professor Donington's researches and knowledge, and the bibliography is likewise a formidable compendium of related reading matter. This is unquestionably an important book, thoroughly enlightening in its earlier parts, and cheerfully provocative in its latter part. It is indispensable reading for any serious student of the history of music, and a most magnificent and expensull diversion for the Wit of Man can invent.

Looking through the scener depicted here, one realized more clearly than ever that the Greek scene has suffered more from modern industry than it did from Turkish tyranny. The *Rediscovery of Greece* constitutes an excellent demonstration of the value of the work now being done by the National Trust for Greece, some of whose members are active in this century. Illustrations of Athens, particularly one of Syntagma Square in 1863, make one keenly regret that national pride required the transfer of the capital from Nafplia, a far more suitable location.

"The divine Augustus had grey eyes like those of horses, the whites being larger than normal in a human being," so we learn from *Life in Rome: the Augustan Age, A Source Book* (733pp, Oxford University Press, £22.50, 0 19 872108 0). Edited by Kitty Chisholm and John Forgan, and designed to accompany an Open University course, it is a compilation of primary sources in translation, covering politics, art, literature, social history and philosophy. The editors have included sources useful not only for a detailed study of Rome under Augustus, but also for a more wide-ranging study of the development of Principate to Empire under Augustus' successors, and for the development of Roman rule in the provinces of Gaul, Germany, Britain and Judea.

Hellenic scenes

By Hugh Lloyd-Jones

FANI-MARIA TSIGAKOU:

The Rediscovery of Greece
Travelers and Painters of the Romantic Era
208pp. with 173 illustrations, 30 in colour. Thames and Hudson. £16.
0 500 23336 5

The first half of this useful and delightful book consists of a historical sketch of "The Rediscovery of Greece", and "The Picturesque Compromise". The second half is entitled "A Journey Through Greece", and takes us systematically through the country, giving illustrations and descriptions of place after place dating from the period between 1790 and 1890. The illustrations are chosen with great skill, and are reproduced in a way that fully maintains the high reputation in such matters which this publisher enjoys.

Considering how close a connection with the Eastern Empire arose as a result of the Crusades, the extent of western ignorance of Greece during the Middle Ages is almost unbelievable. In the fifteenth century, when interest in Greek literature was reawakening, Cristoforo Buondelmonti and Cyriac of Ancona with their detailed presentation of Greek monuments were a startling exception to the general rule. Late in the following century, and not long after the battle of Lepanto, the English scholar Martin Crusius was obliged to ask if Athens still existed.

The seventeenth century saw a marked increase in western interest in Greece, and the names of collectors like the Earl of Arundel and Sir Kenneth Digby brought back antiquities, and Sporn and Wheeler began the serious study of the ancient monuments. This book contains sketches of the pediments of the Parthenon made by an artist who accompanied a mission sent by Louis XIV, not long before their destruction in 1687. Christianity, in particular the fatal schism between the eastern and the western church, has much to answer for.

Only during the eighteenth century was the west ready to take a look at Greece directly, and not through Romantic spectacles. Travelers, above all the members of the Society of Dilettanti, brought back valuable records, and Wipacchmann founded the modern study of ancient art; a public weary of the rococo and looking for simplicity, grandeur and closeness to Nature responded to their lead. Early in the nineteenth century, John Elgin Marbles and the sculptures from Aegina reached the West, and the temple at Bassae was discovered. Systematic archaeology could begin,

but artists were as much concerned with Greece as scholars; from England alone, architects as eminent as Wilkins, Cookerell and Barry came to Greece to study. Gell and Dodwell provided the English public with informed guidance, and the Edinburgh painter Hugh William Williams provided both a travel book and an extensive pictorial record, before the War of Liberation.

Fani-Maria Tsigakou perceptively remarks that the painters of this period cared more for the historical associations than for the modern reality of their subject-matter. Claude and Poussin were their models, so that they presented Greek scenery under a diffused light that "tended to blur forms until they seemed part of the very iridescence of the atmosphere". That is very far indeed from nature; Greek light is notably sharp and clear, and half tones and mists are conspicuous by their absence. These artists also tended to arrange their subject-matter in accordance with compositional techniques derived from Claude and Poussin; Miss Tsigakou finds an instance even in the work of Edward Lear, who visited Greece for the first time as late as 1848.

A new era was initiated by the influence of Byron and the dramatic events of the War of Independence; Greece was once seen not through classicistic but through romantic eyes. Delacroix, by his depiction of the massacres of Chios, which made a sensation at the Salon of 1824, gained priceless publicity for the Greek cause; he never went to Greece, though Jean-Robert Augustus provided him with costumes, and seems to owe his inspiration to the work of Byron. The romantic cult of Greece had its superficial side, amusingly revealed by a picture by Aubrey-Lea, reproduced in the book; that shows Chalcidion and Mm de Staël striking attitudes among admiring Greeks, rather as a modern artist might show Sartre and Mary McCarthy among admiring Viet Cong. Still, it was westerners, to take far more interest in Greek realities than they had before; the sympathy which poets and painters showed for Greek national aspirations was a powerful force.

On closer acquaintance with the Greeks whom they had idealized, some westerners reacted against them to their disappointment. William St Clair had described the disillusionment of some western volunteers during the War of Independence. Miss Tsigakou notes the disappointment shown by many westerners after the Greek kingdom was established. As early as 1830, Fellner put out the thesis that most modern Greeks were of Slavonic descent; in 1854, Edmond About

lecture starts with the unfinished Book VIII. The Curcyrar internal revolution of Book III is, Rawlings thinks, answered by the oligarchic revolution at Athens in Book VIII (since this book is unfinished, Rawlings can make things easier for himself by postulating speeches at just the points he wants them). Then, the Spartan peace offer at the time of the Pylos operation would have been picked up by the offer after the battle of Cyzicus, which falls outside the scope of the surviving History; both offers were the result of audacious campaigns planned by out-favour generals (Demosthenes and Alcibiades); both offers were rejected by loud-mouthed demagogues (Cleon and Cleophon). Rawlings has to preface Xenophon to Diodorus here, but an article not cited by Rawlings argues strongly for Diodorus: as Robert Littman, *Transaction of the American Philological Association* for 1968. Thucydides' whole history would have ended - this is not altogether new - with an "Athenian Dialogue" to decide the fate of Athens in 404, just as the first part had ended with the Median Dialogue. (But Melos was destroyed, Athens spared; that would make a very different sort of climax.)

One final implication of Rawlings's thesis is that the early books of Thucydides were written in the light of later events: so Alcides in Book II is, he thinks, unintelligible except in the light of Alcibiades' later behaviour. This of course has serious consequences for the "composition problem". What, on this hypothesis of massive Thucydidean hindsight, is to be done with those passages in the early books which are, undeniably, early?

Rawlings's acuteness is to be admired, but I do not like this warping of Thucydides' text, simply in order to make out of him something so intellectually vulgar as a cyclical historian. Thucydides knew better: events, he says, are "unteachable".



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A city in limbo

By M. R. D. Foot

HENRI MICHEL:
Paris Allemand
379pp. Paris: Albin Michel.

It is difficult to imagine what it would have been like to live in London after a sudden, catastrophic defeat in war, which had left the capital hardly damaged — but no longer the capital. Suppose that the armistice terms had cut off Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland from the kingdom; had left all southern England in enemy hands; had fixed the boundaries of the occupied zone to include Shrewsbury, Birmingham, Northampton, Huntingdon and everywhere east of the Great North Road right up to Berwick; and had set the capital at Harrogate? This was not far off from what happened to France in 1940, when the Germans overran all the north and the west of the country, and occupied three-fifths of it. Paris was no longer the capital, the Third Republic vanished into a constitutional limbo, and the French State was governed from Vichy.

Yet Paris was still Paris. Practically its whole surviving population ran away in the panic exodus of June, but most of those who were not in central government found their way back; over a million fugitives had returned by mid-August, usually by train. The Germans at first went out of their way — far out of their way, compared to their behaviour in Poland the year before or in Russia the year after — to be correct, to be polite. They emptied the shops of desirable goods, but paid for what they took. They paid at a rate of exchange deliberately slanted to undervalue the franc by three-quarters, but at that rate they paid cash over the counter.

They did not forget that they were present as conquerors, and did not allow those they had conquered to forget it either. Nothing but the best would do for them. They made their headquarters in large hotels round the Place de la Concorde and the Rue de Rivoli. The best restaurants, the biggest cinemas, the highest-class brothels were expressly forbidden to the French, reserved for the Germans. The luxurious apartments of rich Jews who had joined in the exodus and been too sensible to return were requisitioned by the German armed forces' senior staff officers and by the hordes of civilian officials who accompanied them. To start with, these officials came to establish lists; then they started to act on them. The cloven hoof soon showed. The army museum, for example, was plundered for the benefit of the army museums in Berlin and Vienna. Mademoiselle Wessermann had presented almost eighty oil paintings to the French nation, which were kept in the vaults of the Bank of France. The site was forced and the paintings were removed to Germany. Reichsmarschall Goering secured for his private collection, from other French private sources, ten Rembrants, ten Degas, ten Monets, three Sisleys, four Cézannes and five van Goghs; all condemned as degenerate by his leader and his party, but in his discriminating eye fairly noisy.

The city became quiet. The supply of private petrol, at once reduced to one-sixth of pre-war demand, dried up. The Germans had plenty of petrol to start with — even for them; it grew short later on the whole. They preferred to walk. Under the jackboot has become a cash phrase for life under Nazi occupation, but there was some truth in it: the sound of patrols in those thumping great knee-boots was usually the loudest noise after curfew. Between noon and 12.30 on October 26, 1943, just three motor cars drove across the Place de la Bourne. The metro still ran, though it was intolerably crowded, especially in winter. German troops could travel on it free. Bicycles were popular, but expensive; new ones were not sold, and second-hand ones, already by the turn of 1940-41, cost

more than a Parisian's average monthly wage. Taxis vanished with petrol. They were replaced by *velo-taxis*, in effect pedalled rickshaws, a Parisian invention which flourished in 1941-44 and vanished at the liberation. *Velo-taxis*, like ordinary bicycles, had to have a licence, and were forbidden to ride two abreast.

There were three major preoccupations for any citizen who tried to stay in Paris and live some sort of normal life: work, food and warmth. At the exodus, factory production ceased. Afterwards, as the managers and senior clerks came back, efforts to re-start it were cheered on by the Communist Party — the only surviving political party — which at that moment urged everybody to support its Nazi allies. But the Nazis had other ideas. Some factories they pillaged, removing all the machine-tools as war booty. Others they diverted to make different things: for example, Babcock et Wilcox — perhaps because they had English names — were converted hurriedly to manufacture tank transporters to be used in the impending invasion of England. That did not last long. It was the one way to be sure of getting some sort of a living, and 590,000 Parisians did so, about a quarter of the population. Some of the remainder went off to relatives in the country. Others showed marvellous adaptability in finding ways of supplying each others' needs. Such trades as dyeing and cobbling flourished in the extreme shortage of cloth.

Yet even if one could earn a wage, could one keep alive on it? There was plenty to eat in black-market restaurants, at astronomical prices; there was precious little in the ordinary kitchen. The amount of meat

coming into Paris in 1941 was less than a third of the 1938 supply, of poultry hardly a tenth of it. The meat ration was 180 grammes (some six and a half ounces) a week, the cheese ration fifty grammes; pure coffee was officially unobtainable; swedes and turnips replaced leeks and carrots at the greengrocer. Fuel was at times even shorter than food. Such coal as there was went to the power stations, and even they could not produce much more power than the metro swallowed. In their silent city, Parisians shivered each winter.

There were still races at Longchamps and Auteuil. The schools were still open, and so was the Sorbonne; they functioned as best they could in the shortage of paper, ink, books, through the constant German precautions with preserving order and absorbing young men into the compulsory labour force for work in Germany. Hardly any attempts were made by the occupiers to direct studies; nor did they interfere with the work of Cocteau, Picasso, Jean Renoir or René Clair. Sartre and Merleau-Ponty could and did lecture on philosophy as they chose.

Paris in fact survived. The birth rate, strangely enough, rose; the death rate fell, so within it did the murder and suicide rates. Not till 1945 did fatal road accidents (at 261) exceed the total of 1939 (232); there were only seventy-six of them in 1943. There were no serious epidemics, though the number of cases of syphilis tripled, and minor skin diseases due to lack of vitamins were common. The city survived; but at a price. Ordinary life became so complicated, that practically everyone had to play some part to one or other of the black (or at least dark grey) markets that sprang into exist-

ence. There was brisk business in forged ration tickets of many kinds, and the openings for blackmail, petty fraud and petty theft were legion. Strict consciences grew elastic, stern men and women bent to necessity and lied.

These black markets were positively encouraged — some of the most lucrative of them were run — by the occupiers. Henri Michel disentangles with exceptional skill the plethora of German police and other authorities in Paris, which, although it was no longer the capital of France; became the capital of German administration for those parts of France that the Nazis did not find it more convenient to govern from elsewhere. (Alsace and Lorraine became part of the Third Reich, and the *départements* of Nord and Pas-de-Calais were run from Brussels.) The Abwehr, the armed forces' security service, and the Sicherheitsdienst, the party security service, had separate offices and interlocking duties: a typical instance of Nazi planned confusion. Neither hesitated to look for help among the criminal classes of Paris, and one individual who worked for each in turn, and for the currency control organization as well, thoroughly understood how to line his own pocket. This was Henri Chamberlain, called Lafont, who teamed up with Bony, an inspector who had been dismissed from the French police for embezzlement in the aftermath of the Stavisky affair. The Bony-Lafont gang ran, from 93 rue Lauriston, a salon, a torture chamber, a luxurious brothel, and a highly remunerative series of raids and persecutions. They played a conspicuous part in the meanest and most deplorable aspect of the occupation, the searching-out of Jews for dispatch to the killing-

grounds in Poland. When fate caught up with Lafont in 1944 he was carrying several million francs, several German passports, and his papers as a captain in the SS; and he had a million United States dollars stashed away in a private bank account. He and Bony were tried and shot before the year was out; their memory is hardly fragrant, but they proved at least that it was possible to live in luxury in wartime Paris.

Michel has again put into his debt not only historians, but everybody who cares about culture and everybody who bothers about the difficulties of one country occupied by another. He has the rare gift of setting out complicated subjects plainly, without being dull; and he writes, in admirably clear French, from an exceptional command of his subject and his sources. Though he has recently retired as secretary of the French committee on the history of the Second World War, he remains editor of the formidable *Revue d'histoire de la deuxième guerre mondiale*, which he created in 1950, and nobody is better qualified to handle his subject. He has applied his erudition to the municipal archives, to the mass of existing literature, and to careful cross-examinations, and has written a book of lasting interest and value.

This is the first of a pair of volumes. It opens with Paris laid bare to the occupier in June 1940, and it covers what its author calls the saddest years in the city's history. Its last paragraph reminds its readers of the obscure general who, from London, encouraged the French in that last battle but not a war. How faith in him grew and triumphed will be the theme of the companion volume, *Paris résistante*.

Trevelyan writes, "one goes on fighting, killing, simply because one has to; there is a strange compulsion in battle, but it is usually a matter of self-preservation." Major Boehmle of the German 1st Parachute Division, which astonished the world by the tenacity of its defence of Cassino, attributed its success not to Nazi conditioning but to "three qualities — comradeship, esprit de corps and efficiency." Another German soldier, who experienced both, described Anzio as worse than Stalingrad. Trevelyan recounts many acts of individual heroism on both sides, and many moments when morale was near breaking-point. In the quieter moments, when the shooting died down, there were the same everyday concerns: flies, lice, rats, "brewing up among dead bodies, old tins, excreta and, of course, mud." Trevelyan describes the confusion and terror and squalor of the battlefield with stark truthfulness, but also with admirable restraint.

When the Allies landed at Anzio, the Romans expected them to arrive within days, if not hours. Instead there ensued four months of increasing hardship and fear. Not everyone suffered. Wealthy Italians, their German rulers, and German soldiers on leave could eat well at black-market restaurants and hear Gigli singing at the opera. But, for the majority, food and the necessities of life grew scarcer, and the Italian appeals for relief had little effect. Churchill's visit to Eden at the end of April, 1944, was a disaster for the Allies. It is with pain that I write these words. Rome must starve till freed. Appeals to both sides to declare Rome an open city were equally fruitless, and Allied bombing, though mild compared to what was inflicted on other Italian cities, added another element of fear.

German rule became progressively harsher. No able-bodied male was secure from the threat of seizure for forced labour. For the brave minority who fell the compulsion to resist, some by fighting and killing, many more by sheltering anti-Fascists or the realization of a dream.

Little is said of the higher purposes for which the war was fought. The soldiers' assumptions, if any, are left unspoken. "In the front line"

escaped prisoners-of-war or Jews, arrest could be assumed to mean torture, either by the Gestapo at its headquarters in Via Tasso or by its Italian emulators, Caruso and Koch, at the Pensione Olmetre. "Some evil deeds have had to be recorded here," Trevelyan writes in his prologue; but he passes no moral judgments, still less does he "indict a race or a nation". He presents the evidence and lets his readers judge.

The same judicious restraint is shown in his absorbing accounts of three of the most controversial events of these months: the Allied bombing of the monastery of Monte Cassino on February 15; the execution by the Gestapo of 335 Italians in reprisal for the killing on March 23 of thirty-two German soldiers by a bomb placed by the GAP in the centre of Rome; and General Mark Clark's insistence at the end of May on changing the direction of his attack so that his Fifth Army should be the first to enter Rome, even at the price of enabling the German Tenth Army retreating from Cassino to escape.

At the time those of us in the Eighth Army moving west from Cassino did not know that Clark had told his commander-in-chief, Alexander, on June 2 that "he would have his troops fire" on us if we tried to advance on Rome. I find a note in my diary for June 4, "Heard that the Americans have got into Rome, splendid work." In the event we passed about five miles to the east of the city, swinging northwards in pursuit of the enemy up the Tiber valley. On June 6, I "climbed to the top of a grassy hill and saw the sprawling outskirts of Rome stretching away to the south, with the dome of St Peter's in the far distance, rising majestically over everything." Visits had to wait till much later. Many of us shared Trevelyan's feelings: at Cassino, as at Anzio, the Eternal City was "always seemed the great inaccessible", and "coming to Rome was the realization of a dream."

The spirit of personalism

By Patrick McCarthy

JOHN HELLMAN:

Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left, 1930-1950
276pp. University of Toronto Press.
\$17.50.
0 8020 2399 1

The title of John Hellman's *Emmanuel Mounier and the New Catholic Left* is misleading because Mounier's creed of personalism was only sporadically left-wing. As Mr Hellman points out in this well-researched book, which is an intellectual biography of Mounier as well as a history of his magazine, *Esprit*, and of the movement that grew up around it, personalism exerted great influence because it could be all things to almost all men. It was Catholic but tinged with heresy; in the 1930s it was pro-fascist and after the Liberation it was pro-communist; in the meantime the Vichy government had both used and jailed Mounier.

Personalism stressed that the stirring-point of Catholicism lay not in the Church and her divine mission but in man's need for God, which might take such diverse forms as the urge to create or the striving for justice. But, if this gave to *Esprit* an anarchical quality, the magazine also explained that the individual's upsurge of spirituality must find expression in a community. *Esprit* was not merely a magazine; in many cities its readers organized discussion groups which were supposed to be the precursors of the personalist community, itself a reflection of the mystical body of Christ.

Mounier castigated the Third Republic because it dissolved the dialectic of person and community, stranding its citizens in a barren individualism from which they emerged every four years to create a spurious, purely legal unity by voting. This is a familiar criticism and it led Mounier in familiar directions. The stodgy, much-maligned Third Republic occupied the middle ground of politics and most of its intellectuals rejected it in favour of more exciting creeds. Mounier also criticized the French Church and its political ally, the Action Française, because they were authoritarian and hierarchical. The second reason for personalism's influence lies in its dislodgement: what it proposed might be vague but what it rejected was real enough.

Mounier himself was born in 1905 of a lower middle-class Grenoble family. He grew up an orthodox Catholic but his faith received a new urgency while he was at university. The book that stirred him was Jacques Rivière's *La trace de Dieu* (1925). Rivière's conversion was a matter of blood and passion; he wrestled God into existence by his need for certainty. Later Mounier discovered Péguy, who taught him that religion was a mystique and that politics too needed a dose of mystique.

When Mounier and his friends founded *Esprit* in 1932 they described it as a "Catholic NRP". But in reality *Esprit* is best seen as one more manifestation of the swing towards commitment in the early 1930s. The Stavisky affair, the February riots of 1934 and Hitler's rise to power were accompanied by a plethora of new magazines like *Communisme* and *Vendredi* on the left, and *Je suis partout* on the right. *Esprit* was the banner around which Catholics were supposed to rally.

Hellman points out that Mounier looked first towards the German National Socialists. This will come as a surprise to most people, who are better acquainted with Mounier's left-wing role in the late 1940s. But the most original chapters of this book analyse *Esprit*'s long flirtation with the segment of the Nazi party led by the Strassers. Dismayed by Hitler's willingness to compromise with big business and big industry, the Strassers defended the concept of fascist revolution and they were duly eliminated after Hitler came to power. But their sense of a new community created by the fascist mystique appealed to Mounier, who criticized

the Nazi emphasis on race but shared their contempt for arid democracy.

Hellman's revelations are unlikely to win Mounier new friends, but one must remember that, although the Second World War has taught us to regard fascism as pure evil, people did not necessarily hold his view in the 1930s. This sad fact should surely be taken into account when one makes historical judgments. To Mounier fascism was a rival mystique, as was communism. The fascist youth group and the communist party cell were flawed examples of the personalist community.

The defeat of 1940 and the establishment of the Vichy government seemed to offer Mounier his chance. His old philosophy teacher, Jacques Chevalier, was named minister of education and another *Esprit* supporter, René Belin, became minister of labour. Vichy's youth groups, its attacks on parliamentarianism and its anti-capitalist rhetoric pleased Mounier. Pétain also set up the *École Nationale des Cadres d'Urriage* which was supposed to train the new Vichy élites. Mounier visited Urriage and personalism became the school's unofficial philosophy.

But, after Laval returned to power and as the war dragged on, Vichy

fell into a policy of simple collaboration. Urriage was closed in December 1942 and personalism was denounced as a philosophy of opposition. Mounier was arrested and kept in prison, which was an extraordinary stroke of good fortune because it enabled him to pose as a *résistant* at the Liberation.

After 1944, Mounier entered upon the period of his greatest influence. Now it was the communist mystique that would revitalize Catholicism. Studying the young Marx, Mounier discovered that the concept of alienation was exactly what he had been denouncing for fifteen years. During the Popular Front *Esprit* had flirted with Maurice Thorez' offer of the "outstretched hand" and Mounier had conducted earnest discussions with Paul Nizan. Now he rewrote the history of *Esprit* and turned it, retrospectively, into a left-wing magazine.

His readers were only too ready to believe him because the war had given new impetus to left-wing Catholicism. The bishops were discredited by their support for Vichy and the Action Française was no more. Mounier's dissidence found echoes in the *Témoignage Chrétien* group and the worker-priest movement. The dream of reconverting the French

working class and the dream of overthrowing capitalism were happily fused. The mass of French Catholics remained unimpressed, preferring the safety of the Christian Democratic party (MRP) or of De Gaulle. But a minority of Catholics broke with the Right and have remained either allies of the Communist and Socialist parties or else politically neutral.

The Prague coup and the start of the Cold War caused Mounier to hesitate, and he backed away from communism as he had done from fascism. He died in 1950 and personalism as a coherent movement may be considered to have run its course by the late 1950s, when the period of intense religious and political commitment came to a close.

Yet Mounier's presence is still felt. He might have been gratified to see the influx of young Catholics into the Socialist party during the 1970s, many of them intransigent left-wingers of the CERES current. Certainly, personalism has influenced the theological changes introduced after the Vatican Council and conversely traditional Catholics might argue that, by attacking the structure of the Church, Mounier succeeded not in creating a new personalist community but in helping to laicize Western Europe.

At present personalism is discussed because it seems to have influenced Pope John Paul II. When he was archbishop of Cracow seminars on personalism were run in his diocese and his statements from the Vatican contain language that Mounier would have approved. The Pope has inherited the personalist tenet that man must pursue and live with God. However he is a traditionalist in his attitude towards church structure and he certainly does not share Mounier's fascination with communism. Instead he seems to use the personalist concept of the community in order to attack the Marxist bureaucracies which govern Eastern Europe.

Mr Hellman's book is by far the best guide to personalism we have had and his knowledge of French intellectual history is impressive. He might, however, have organized his material better. His strict chronological framework causes repetition and his footnotes contain interesting information that should have found a place in the text. He is so concerned with the contradictions of personalism that he never explains clearly what it was. If *Esprit* itself was vague, then it is all the more necessary that its historian be precise. But this is an interesting and indeed a necessary book.

The burden of hegemony

By James Joll

JOSEPH V. FEMIA:
Gramsci's Political Thought
Hegemony, Consciousness and the Revolutionary Process
303pp. Oxford University Press.
\$17.50.
0 19 827251 0

The fascination which Gramsci has for intellectuals is due not only to the importance which he assigns to their role in society, but also to the number of different interpretations which the fragmentary nature of his writings allows. He himself dismissed his early journalistic writings, quite unjustly as I have turned out every day [which] should have been forgotten immediately afterwards", while the 2,350 pages of the published edition of the *Prison Notebooks* rarely have more than a few paragraphs of continuous writing. Joseph V. Femia, in an admirably lucid and honest book, faces the problem at the outset:

Despite the huge and ever-growing pile of secondary literature, there remains to this day remarkably little agreement about what Gramsci really said. His work has called into existence an army of interpreters whose unceasing labours have buried them beneath a mountain of controversy which has obscured the texts themselves. . . . Just how does one deal with a thinker who has been variously described as a dialectical materialist and a subjective idealist, a Stalinist totalitarian and a mild democratic socialist, an idiosyncratic revolutionary and a prophet of peaceful evolution?

Dr Femia's own answer is, through a careful reading of the texts, to "resist the temptation to collect debating points and instead attempt to sort out the origins of these contradictions or to trace them back to a more fundamental unity".

Femia has provided an account and analysis of some of the basic questions raised by Gramsci, especially the nature of "hegemony", the relation in Marxist theory between the base and the superstructure and the role of conscious human volition in social change. He has faced the question how far Gramsci remained an authoritarian in his concept of the revolution and how far he was prepared to envisage the communist party sharing power with other groups. Finally he provides an excellent survey of the various interpretations and criticisms which have been made by commentators from many

political camps. His conclusions place Gramsci firmly among the revolutionary Marxists; but he shows how he broke with the idea that the revolution would come automatically because of the inevitable collapse of capitalism and how troubled he was by the problems of reconciling the need for a disciplined revolutionary party with the preservation of some sort of democratic structure and individual freedom of expression.

Femia's discussion, especially of the role of the party in Gramsci's thought, covers some of the same ground as Anne Showstack Sassoon's interesting study *Gramsci's Politics*, published in 1980, presumably late for inclusion in Femia's bibliography. Although the two books differ in the interpretation of several points, they complement each other and each increases our understanding of Gramsci. Sassoon's is narrower and more esoteric, but it brings out some points better than Femia's book, particularly in its account of the role of intellectuals as the organizers of hegemony. She also rightly attacks Gramsci's controversy with Bordigha and its influence on his later thought which forced him to clarify, though perhaps never quite successfully, his ideas about the relationship between the élite and the masses.

Although both writers discuss the conflict in Gramsci between his idealist and Marxist inheritance, neither ever really explains why Croce had such a hold over him, so that, long after he might have been expected to have thrown off Croce's influence, he devoted many pages to the discussion and refutation of his ideas. One cannot help feeling that Femia finds this unreasonable and that, like most English-speaking philosophers, he is so irritated by what he calls Croce's "porous terminology and opaque style of argumentation" that, for all his scrupulous attempt to expound some of Croce's ideas, he cannot understand why someone as intelligent as Gramsci should have taken Croce so seriously and why, although finally opting for Marx and Lenin, he should have found it necessary to spend so much time fighting his battles with Croce over and over again.

The trouble with many discussions of Gramsci's social and political theory is that they are carried on solely within the framework of Marxist discourse. Femia is therefore right to remind us that Gramsci is concerned with some of the traditional questions in political philosophy. He relates Gramsci's concept of "hegemony" to other attempts to explain the phenomenon of consent and political obedience. He discusses Gram-

sci in the context of conflict and consensus theories of society and points out the different degrees to which a ruling class can retain its hegemony through persuading other groups to accept its system of values. These degrees range from, in Femia's words, "a relationship without contradictions and antagonisms on either a social or ethical level", through a situation in which the integration of the masses is fragile and the gap between their professed beliefs and their real feelings great, to the relationship characteristic of Italy where, although the ruling class established a consensus among themselves, they failed to maintain a common system of values with the common people, producing a "detachment without hegemony" and an unstable situation which was ripe for revolution.

Femia, unlike some commentators on Gramsci, sees the need to face the problem of applying Gramsci's analysis in the *Prison Notebooks* to the real world. He does not say much about Gramsci's discussion of the Italian past, which fills much of the *Notebooks*, but he has interesting things to say about possible ways to test Gramsci's views in the contemporary world by reference to recent sociological studies of working-class behaviour. He argues convincingly that the notion of "contradictory consciousness", by which a man subscribes at one level to the values of the ruling class while denying them

W.H. Smith Annual Literary Award

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The Destruction of a Family 1842-1942'
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WHSMITH

commentary

Music for words

By Christopher Wintle

The Blooms of Dublin
Radio 3

"Nothing", cries Stephen Dedalus in the Nighttown sequence from *Ulysses*: and "Götterdämmerung" interpolates Anthony Burgess when the passage recurs in his musical *The Blooms of Dublin*, an interpolation that summarizes Joyce's parodistic version of Wagner's *Armageddon*: "(Stephen) lifts his ashplant high with both hands and smashes the chandelier. Time's vivid final flame leaps, and in the following darkness, ruin of all space, shattered glass and toppling masonry. THE GASJET: Purling." And literary faints who guard the Joycean horde too jealously ought to beware: the best things in this adaptation are those that have learnt most from Joyce about irreverence, not least to the letter of the text. Listening to *Ulysses* can't be the same thing as reading the book, and if adaptation is to have any purpose, probably shouldn't be either.

However, if there is a complaint about the relation of Burgess's already notoriously bawdy piece to its original, it is that it settles for picaresque when it should have permitted itself infamous infidelities. As it stands, the format addresses itself mainly to the book's aficionados. Burgess condenses many of the most dramatically suggestive chapters into music-hall type scenes, which are either interrupted by, or conclude with, appropriate songs or choruses and then displays these across two acts. For the most part, the spoken material is derived from the dialogues and monologues alone (vertiginously compressed); and in on each scene the tendency to highlight single issues seems to be guided as much by an eye for a well-varied succession of musical numbers as by a nose for the literary plums. Important things are inevitably dropped, though curiously the attempt at too great a loyalty leads on occasions to incomprehensibility. Nor is the matter always helped by having to share each of the main parts between an actor and a singer.

But Burgess is at his best in the lyrics, most of which are his own, and some of which match the spirit of Joyce's anarchic obscenity wonderfully well. "We must go to Athens", declares stately, plump Buck Mulligan, and at once the orchestra oom-pahs to his fantasy of "every colleen Aphrodite / casting off her cotton nightie". Bloom's graveside "let them sleep in their maggot beds. They are not going to get no this innings. Warm beds:

warm full-blooded beds" gives way to a Byronic ditty about Goddesses and boddices, including a vision of "sin after sin without Nemesis / love on a noble-man's premises". Most entertaining of all is the mock-Shakespearean adaptation of the Lying-in Hospital chapter, where "wombfruit" leads to a raunchy chorus beginning "a fertile womb is a thing of gloom / soon there won't be standing-room / for copulation without desire". Continuing "may God preserve the condom / the pessary too of course", and concluding in the first verse with "coitus interruptus" - musical hiccup - "is somewhat second-rate / and as for God-sant periods, its often hard to wait". Thor hurls a thunderbolt, but Burgess shows himself honourably to belong to the "brood of mockers".

On the other hand, his musical score seems rather blunt. Burgess (whose father was, for a time, a music-hall singer) had already given the impression in *Earthly Powers* that he might prove a dab hand at popular idioms (editor of the next *Crucies*, piece include *The Blooms* under Campanelli, Domenico), and so, in a rather anonymous way, he is: the various numbers, inevitably parodistic and allusive, are centred on Broadway idioms, and are sometimes (as with the choral Cuckoo march) very amusing. But he has still only responded to half of what Joyce offers the musician.

For however much Bloom may have proclaimed the Wagnerian reign to be "rover for rever and ever and ev . . .", Joyce was anxious that his work - not dissimilar in its mythic backgrounds, its scale and complexity, and in its capacity to probe psychologically through the association of what Nietzsche described as a "host of tiny fragments" - should in one sense compete at the same level: Ellmann relates how Joyce "turned on his heel" when a friend refused to acknowledge that his *Sirens* "musical effects" were better than those of *Die Walküre*. But there isn't very much correlation in this musical between the "musical effects" of Joyce's words (so haunting on the radio in the Gorty McDowell scene) and those of the score. With exceptions (the setting of Joyce's "the heaven-tree of stars hung with humid night-blue fruit"), the transition from action to music has all the abrupt discontinuity of an early *violin*. And although in Molly's closing monologue Burgess does aim for a sentimental grace in the "flower of the mountain" song's reiterated "can you come back again?", the earlier interpolations (especially the facetious "there's nothing like a kiss"), in falling fully to integrate with the text, destroy the music of her *Liebestod*.

All this, though, is the limitation of an over-deferential medium. If, as Philip Larkin recently suggested (TLS, February 2, 1981), "real poems are not meant to be set to music", they are self-sufficient as eggs, not the same probably goes for real novels like *Ulysses*. Certainly, other composers intoxicated by the Joycean aesthetic, and by the language that goes with it, have, like Wagner, tended to forge their fragments of music and words at one and the same time (Berio's *Recital for Cathy*, or his earlier *Omaggio a James Joyce* are outstanding examples). But this may be asking more of Burgess than he set out to achieve. As it stands, *The Blooms* is a curiosity that has its moments and should be worth the occasional airing.

The Society for the Promotion of New Music, which organizes an annual series of events intending to give a platform to composers who are not yet established. Its 1982 season will begin with a series of five events at St John's, Smith Square, including three public orchestral rehearsals. Further information and application forms for the 1982-83 season are available from SPNM, 10 Stratford Place, London W1N 9AE.

Words for music

By Paul Driver

Zalze
Old Vic

Musica Nel Chiostro is a small opera company established by Adam Pollock in 1974 at his restored seventeenth-century monastery in Batignano, Tuscany. In eight summer festivals so far it has mounted nearly a dozen seventeenth and eighteenth-century neglected operas as well as the occasional small-scale modern opera. Its latest production, launched last year in Batignano, is of Mozart's unfinished *Figaro*, with a title, known as *Zalze*, and it has been supplied with a connecting commentary and ingenious new framework by Italo Calvino. It ran



"The Russian Doll" (c. 1915) in crayon and watercolour by Ethelbert White (1891-1972) is on show at the Anthony d'Offay Gallery, 9 Dering Street, London W1 until March 6. The exhibition, British Drawings and Watercolours, 1980-1990, also includes a drawing by Frank Dobson of Sylvia Townsend Warner, Duncum Grant's drawing of E. M. Forster and Vanessa Bell's design for the dust jacket of *Three Guineas*.

Suburban amour fou

By Richard Combs

The Woman Next Door
Curzon Cinema

It is paradoxical that Truffaut's biggest commercial success should have been *The Last Metro*, a disjointed, contradictory film in which he tried to yoke the humanist warmth of Renoir with the ironic artificiality of Hitchcock. But it seems to have encouraged him to think that his way ahead lies in diversification. *The Woman Next Door*, Truffaut's latest film, is just as contradictory and the end just as unsatisfying, although there is something oddly appealing about the jostle of its ill-assorted elements.

The beginning bristles with possibilities, and a certain kind of playfulness that could take the film down a number of routes, to meet with a number of *châtiments* coming the other way (Renoir and Hitchcock, again, even Claude Chabrol, Truffaut's old *Châtelain* colleague). An aerial shot follows a police van speeding along a country road, through fields and thickets of houses; the aerial view imposes a neatness, abstraction and sense of fatality on the sequence. We are then introduced to a commentator, a middle-aged woman who teasingly launches into the story of where the van is heading and why.

But first, a tease of a different kind, she is standing in front of a tennis court, and remarks that we probably think of her as a tennis player (a suggestion that conjures an amazingly literal-minded kind of spectator). She

for three nights at the Old Vic last week.

The show is a good one, brief and rather touching, musically sublime from (almost) the start to the finish with the added appeal of the teller (Marius Goring) and his tale. The set - for the Old Vic adaptation at any rate - is a dusty theatre-wardrobe whose contents are to be auctioned. The narrator emerges from behind a rack of mouldering costumes and pulls a manuscript out of a chest. It is the libretto of an opera - "a story of love and adventure set in the cruel Orient" - but many pages are missing, perhaps were never written. He tries to conjure it up for us: the characters appear one by one, in static poses, on a revolving stage. He lists the properties of the eighteenth-century Orient: "Sultans: merciless one moment, clement the next. Perfumed gardens. Dancing odalisques. Janissaries with curved scimitars. Escapes into the desert." As the characters, vividly costumed, come to life, the narrator - a benign, contemplative presence - flits around them in a dinner-jacket. The action flows nicely along with his periodic explanations to replace the spoken dialogue which does not exist. The first seven (including Zalze's famous aria, "Ruhe saft, mein holdes Leben") of the opera's fifteen extant numbers are heard.

Calvino is fond of wry humour at the genre's expense, introducing silken ladders and pointing the absurdity of Gomanz's second aria where he is thanking Allah and running off to Zalze simultaneously. But by the time we reach the opening bars of the trio which ends Act I, Calvino's narrator has become too perplexed to carry on. Halting the music, he reflects on the character of Allah as thus far revealed and is unconvinced: "First he seems an implacable persecutor. Then, all of a sudden he changes his mind and becomes an angel of mercy." So he tries to invent a more credible story: the action is gone through again, in epitome, with the incipits of each

number passing in review. He is dissatisfied, and a third hypothesis has to be explored before the beautiful music can finally burst forth.

Act II (the third act, like the overture, was never begun) proceeds in similar fashion. An opening "rhapsody" - impassioned speech to orchestral interjections, for Salim Soliman as, before, for Gomanz - a couple of striking aniss for Zalze, more gushing commentary ("In the Orient, nature consists of parched deserts and of cages where nightingales sing") and a collapse of credit. This time no fewer than four interpretations of the motivations and plot are enacted before the whole opera fades away in tranced irresolution.

Zalze obviously needs many helping hands if it is to be staged - and it must be staged, for it is the watershed in Mozart's operatic development, having important affiliations with *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* of two years later and *Die Zauberflöte*. Calvino, director Graham Vick and designer Adam Pollock correctly appreciate that modern taste is quite happy to dispense with beginnings and endings - with overture and final chorus - and positively welcomes gappiness, asymmetry and a tantalizing play of signs (all features, of course, that mark Calvino's recent fiction, with its emphasis on the contingent and ultimately unfixable nature of any tale). Their production is a case of latter-day "inspiring" that is superbly and necessarily vindicated. The libretto has been translated by William Weaver (it is not yet available) and contains fine things ("Freedom was a blue stripe on the horizon") along with a few purple passages such as the postscript. The stars of the show were soprano Deborah Rees (Zalze) and bass William Muckle (Allah). Adrian Thompson sang Gomanz, Neil Jenkins Soliman, Jane Glover conducted with flair, securing an orchestral tone that was neither too rich nor too raw.

ble and that the amiable, elegant Mathilde may be more intense and compulsive than she seems.

An emotional reversal or transference (Hitchcock again?) to fact turns out to be the crux of the film. Although Mathilde has walked out on Bernard in the past, we are given to understand that it was his unpredictability, even violence, which drove her to leave him. This is confirmed by Bernard's behaviour once they renew the affair: he becomes jealous, demanding, and eventually, at a garden party given by the Baughards, assaults her in public. However, he recovers quickly from the shock and the shame, and it is Mathilde who spirals into depression, self-disgust and complete breakdown. The stage is set for the act that will summon the police van.

As to where Truffaut finds himself in this lethal quadrangle, the answer unfortunately is in all the wrong places. The film is laced with the kind of self-references and movie-jokes that proliferated in *The Last Metro*: Bernard's job is clearly supposed to remind us of what Antoine Doinel did for a living in *Bed and Board*, and there is a reference to Mathilde as "la femme de l'aviateur" (her husband is an air-traffic controller). More irritatingly, Truffaut constantly steering us away from the central couple or muddling the psychology of their affair, through a myriad of scenes with minor characters, who serve a quasi-comic, mildly punning function. The effect is rather like a host who sees his party taking a morbid turn and becomes avariciously manic in his efforts to keep it light and sparkling on the surface.

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On page 11 there is a list of booksellers where these books can be obtained either from stock or by special order, subject to their availability, from the publishers.

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commentary

Ambuscading the amiable

By Stephen Fender

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas
The Gate at the Latchmere

Early in 1971 the American journalist Hunter S. Thompson went to Southern California to investigate the death of the radical Chicano news director of a bilingual local television station, Ruben Salazar had been sitting in a bar in East Los Angeles when a County Sheriff's deputy fired a CS gas canister into the room, and blew the top of his head off. Thompson's 'Strange Rumblings in Aztlan', first published in *Rolling Stone* in April of that year and later reprinted in the collection of his 'straight' journalism called *The Great Shark Hunt*, traces the futile efforts made by the police to cover up the story, and the growing violence of the alienated Chicanos as they came to realize that no one would be punished for the death of their champion. Caught between the increasing expectations and hostility of the oppressed community and the growing awareness that American police are capable, not just of evading awkward questions, but actually killing the people who ask them, Thompson and the lawyer Oscar Acosta escaped to a long weekend in Las Vegas.

Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas, the result of this bolt for air, should therefore be read as an interlude in the enquiry into the death of Salazar - a fantasy to supplant the gruesome reality of Los Angeles, and also as 'gonzo journalism' (that is, deliberately distorted, rhetorically heightened, and exaggerated) rather than the straight coverage of the real world. Thompson himself called it 'a failed experiment' (his italics) and he is right. As the much advertised 'savage journey to the heart of the American dream', *Fear and Loathing* is bogus, its main spring is Los Angeles, not Las Vegas, and its state of revulsion is chiefly induced by drugs taken in order to escape that ugly reality further west. The targets of its supposed satire - the sad, square middle-Americans who take pleasure in Las Vegas - turn out to be no more threatening than the Sunday-school outing which Tom Sawyer 'ambuscaded' in *Huckleberry Finn*. The book is interesting mainly as a symptom of a state of mind, in which the paranoid fear of being arrested for fraud, or for the possession of firearms and the use of drugs is forever not being confirmed by the incomprehension, blandness or even amiability of hoteliers and local constabulary.

Adapted by Lou Stein for the Gate Theatre Club in its new theatre-restaurant complex in Bal-

tersea, *Fear and Loathing* looks less savage than ever. As a thematically related introduction to the show, the restaurant serves delicious tapers (at two for £3 they are slightly more expensive than in the bar of East Los Angeles), as well as guacamole, refried beans, pecan pie, margaritas and tequila sunrises. The theatre itself is tiny and described as 'experimental' although its layout is the conventional one of banked seats with the stage at one end. Even without scenery the actors barely have room to move, and the production designer Wallace Hain does her best with a sort of conjurer's wardrobe of hinged beds and walls, and two fibreglass car bonnets that fold up into a backdrop.

Then there is the adaptation itself. The big question was how Lou Stein would externalize the state of being high on drugs. The answer is, he doesn't try. Again, this may be something to do with the lack of space. Whereas a truly experimental theatre company of the 1960s - say, the La Mama troupe - might have mimed hallucinations in a swirl of dance and strobe lights, Stein settles for the static, literary contrivance of splitting Thompson and his 'gonzo' accomplices, Raoul Duke into a narrator and an actor. But even this limited device is not used to its fullest extent; the two functions are not divided as between internal and external realities, or paranoid expectation and bland actuality, but between dialogue and recitative. The narrator is there mainly to provide continuity. Thus reversed and supported, the text becomes realistic, naturalized, domesticated.

The real problem is the assumption shared by producer, actors and even audience; that they are dealing with a 'classic "statement" about America in the early 1970s, and that if *Fear and Loathing* could somehow be enshrined in a conventional stage production, it could be left to tell its own story, whereas the real interest in the narrative is in the contradictions that emerge when it is put back in its proper compositional context. A more fitting stage version would have found a way of taking the classic object, so misleadingly conceived as self-sufficient satire, to pieces. As it is, the very virtues of the Latchmere production, its pace, timing and professionalism, convert the 'gonzo' experiment into the well-made play. *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas* is at the Gate at the Latchmere until March 20.

Strictly Entre Nous, a play for two actors about the 'work, sex-life, politics, religion, ageing and death' of W. H. Auden opened at the Birmingham Repertory Studio Theatre on February 10. The play, which will run until March 6, is written by Vince Foxall and directed by Bill Pryde.

A Splendid Documentary History of the "Other" Founding Fathers

The Complete Anti-Federalist

edited by HERBERT J. STORING
with the assistance of Murray Dry

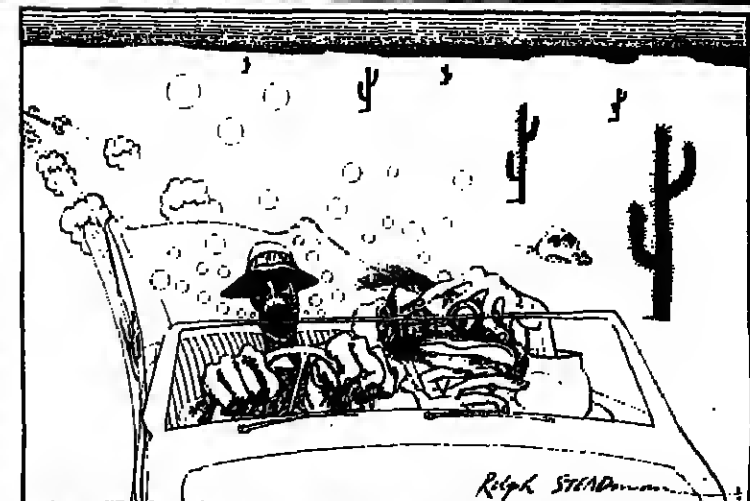
The Anti-Federalists, in Storing's view, are entitled to be considered among the Founding Fathers of the United States of America for it was largely due to their efforts that the Constitution was so quickly amended to include a bill of rights. This unprecedented collection of documents - newspaper articles and letters, pamphlets, essays, speeches, and manuscript notes - presents the arguments of the Anti-Federalists and should restore them to their proper place in history. Many of their insights have a decidedly topical ring: they worried about the expense of big government, taxation, the growth of power and influence in Washington, dishonest politicians, military spending, and their responses are preserved, undiminished, in this monumental work.

Seven-volume set, 1,865 pages, £122.50, available February 1982.

(Volume 1, 'What the Anti-Federalists were for', is available in paperback, at £3.50.)

The University of Chicago Press

126 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W 9SD



Raoul Duke (Hunter S. Thompson) and his 300-pound Smoot attorney Oscar Acosta in their white Cadillac convertible (*The Shark*). One of Raoul Steadman's illustrations for the serialization of *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas*, it is reproduced from the fourth anniversary issue of *Rolling Stone* (November 11, 1971).

In degradation and despair

By Stanley Wells

A Yorkshire Tragedy
On the Great Road
Old Half Moon Theatre

The Yorick Theatre Company, newly formed, admirably declares an aim to perform 'neglected classics home grown and foreign and stretching from the wealth of Elizabethan drama up to, say, Lorca and Brecht'. It makes a start with Michael Batz's productions of two intelligently chosen plays, both of genuine interest, and forming a good double bill because, though different in many respects, they have points in common, and because each has a playing-time of under an hour.

Like *A Yorkshire Tragedy*, Chekhov's early play *On the Great Road* is adapted from a prose narrative, his own short story 'The Assassin'. The Russian censor found it too sordid for representation, and banned it. It too has as its central character a man, once prosperous and respected, reduced to degradation and despair, but whereas the Elizabethan husband's condemnation of his wife is merely a projection of his self-hatred, Bortsov has reason to blame the woman who frivolously deserted him on his wedding day. Hopelessly alcoholic, he comes to an inn so sordid that even the host goes to sleep on his own bar. Here are assembled some poor pilgrims, a labourer, and a thieving tramp, Merik. At first Bortsov's humiliated pleas for drink are ignored, but when in desperation he hands over a gold locket containing the portrait of the wife with whom he is still infatuated, he becomes first an object of interest then, as his story emerges, of sympathy. Merik gains interest as the play progresses: a bully, a thief, vicious in his treatment of the pilgrims, he is impelled by misadventure to a profound sympathy with Bortsov. When, all improbably, the wife herself comes to the inn, it is Merik, not her wronged husband, who has to be restrained from murdering her. The play contains some forced exposition and melodramatic contrivance, but is worth seeing both in its own right and as showing Chekhov on the way to developing the techniques characteristic of his maturity.

The company seems more at home in the naturalism of this play. 'Demien Thomas, as Bortsov, succeeds this time, through costume, make-up, and bearing, in creating a convincing image of the character, even before he speaks above all, Gregory de Polnay as Merik has the measure of the prose rhythms, effortlessly holding the audience's attention in a performance of quiet authority. Michael Batz's translation is fluent and idiomatic, but, whether as translator or director, he should not have allowed one character to buy his drink with peace while the others used coppers.

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This collection of essays is concerned with the way revolutions in science occur. It centres on the contemporary debate between those who offer a traditional, positivist and realist account of science and those who believe that the history of science supports a fundamentally different view of the way in which scientific concepts work. Paperback £3.50
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Joseph V. Femia

The unfolding idea of Antonio Gramsci's famous *Prison Notebooks* is the concept of hegemony. In his study of these fragmentary writings, Dr Femia elucidates the precise character of this concept, explores its philosophical assumptions, and sets out its implications for Gramsci's explanation of social stability and his vision of the revolutionary process. £17.50

Oxford University Press

to the editor

Yorkists and Tudors

Sir, - Charles Ross and his reviewer G. R. Elton (January 22) must congratulate themselves on having done an extremely effective hatchet job on Richard III and his defenders, but the amount of space employed and the venom demonstrated in deriding the latter have a curiously defensive ring. What are they afraid of? According to Elton, after the Ross biography Richard's defenders have "not a sparrow's leg to stand on", though those same defenders know exactly what Charles Ross has omitted in the course of arriving at this result. If Richard III was as conventional, ordinary, undistinguished and without achievements as Elton says, it is certainly strange that he should be such a controversial figure and excite such passions. Andreas Kalkoff in his *Richard III: Sein Leben und seine Zeit* thinks that the English appear to need their "wicked king" for what he calls "psychische Hygiene" - a concept which bears the guilt of centuries, at least as convincing an explanation as G. R. Elton's suggestion that Richard's defenders are drawn from the ranks of those "who cannot resist pulling Shakespeare down".

Even if Richard III was "not a nice man" (a phrase delightfully evocative of A. A. Milne's King John who was not a nice man, and had his Little Wags, so that sometimes no one spoke to him for days and days) he inspired love and loyalty to a remarkable degree, not only in his own lifetime but, much more inexplicably, at the present time. It all depends on the point of view. Of course he is condemned by most of the contemporary evidence, but as Charles Ross writes, nearly all accounts of him come from the South, more particularly London. A point which is perhaps not sufficiently taken into consideration is that although there were no newspapers in the fifteenth century, the journalistic mind, even that of the gutter press, could not have been absent. It is noteworthy that in his own private prayer in his Book of Hours - an anguished cry from the heart which owed nothing to formal devotion - Richard did not ask for his enemies to be overthrown, but that the hatred they bore him should be assuaged, extinguished and brought to nothing. A jury brings in a verdict according to the evidence, but is every juror convinced, when the evidence has been conflicting, that the whole truth about the accused has been revealed? And if H. G. Hanbury's "ridiculous praise for Richard, the great legislator" ascribed "quite without grounds" to the legislative initiative to the king, it was a misconception shared by Richard's contemporaries.

Richard III would hardly expect to find friends among admirers of Henry VIII, so aptly described by Paul Murray Kendall as the archetypal entrepreneur, "shrewd, wary, his gaze unwaveringly on the main chance", whose flagrant chicanery in dating the beginning of his reign from the day before Bosworth brought him in prizes from Richard's attainted followers to equal his resurrections in the previous reign. Churchill wrote: "The venom of a man's enemies is

the measure of his strength." It would appear that Richard III's strength is assured for some time to come.

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Sir, - Towards the end of his review of Charles Ross's *Richard III* (January 22), G. R. Elton offers some interesting reflections on the differences between Yorkist and early Tudor government. "Yorkshire failure ultimately derived from the dynasty's inability to free itself from dependence upon some sector of the political nobility", Yorkist kings did not become "national" kings and did not understand, as the Tudors did, "that kingship could prosper only if it was elevated above the ruck of aristocratic politics".

But the relationship between the crown and the nobility (like that between the crown and parliament) in the later fifteenth and sixteenth centuries is better understood as a partnership than as a conflict. Kings and noblemen had an immense and shared interest in maintaining the political stability and social tranquility that guaranteed the continuance of their privileged position at the apex of a hierarchical society. But kings were not always fathers of their country of whom it could be said that they ruled not in their own interests but for the good of their people. It is not difficult, for example, to see Henry VIII's passion for Anne Boleyn, and all its consequences, as kingship applied for personal ends. Of course the policies of the 1530s were defended as in the national interest, but royal propaganda, far from being "non-partisan", should not be mistaken for truth.

In periods of political calm it is quite correct that few noblemen aspired to more than the enjoyment of their wealth and rank, but their absence from the king's council is a sign more of their unwillingness to become involved in the tedium of day-to-day administration than of any growing weakness. As K. B. McFarlane pointed out, noblemen were counsellors, not aspirants for office. Moreover, early Tudor kings remained greatly dependent on their landed nobility. They relied upon them wherever possible for the general supervision of their "counties", the areas in which noblemen concentrated their holdings of land, a dependence which early Tudor kings did nothing to reduce and much to maintain. They relied upon their nobility above all when they needed armed forces to fight a war or to crush a rebellion; for example, the loyalty to Henry VIII of the fourth earl of Shrewsbury during the Pilgrimage of Grace was crucial.

It was a misconception shared by Richard's contemporaries.

Differences between Yorkist and early Tudor politics, perhaps more apparent than real, may owe more to the chance of the absence or presence of princes of the blood royal, to the accidents of inheritance, and, above all, in the personal relations of a king with his leading subjects as individuals, relations subject to all the vagaries of human character.

GEORGE BERNARD.
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Georg Lukács

Sir, - In reviewing the two Lukács books (January 22), George Steiner admits to having trouble with translation. He writes: "If the German translation is accurate, Lukács qualifies the tortures whereby false confessions were exacted... as 'bedenklich', and he offers his own rendering of this expression as 'giving grounds for thoughtful concern'. However, *bedenklich* means 'dubious, doubtful, questionable, suspicious'. Steiner's attempted translation is incorrect and unidiomatic, to say the least.

Then again he has trouble with *Leerlauf*, an expression borrowed from the automotive world. *Ein beängstigender Leerlauf* is simply "a centrifugal idling" or "coasting", which, incidentally, would lend an English translation of Lukács's phrase an added ambiguity, "the free world" is "free-wheeling", like a bike. "Empiness" won't do. A stylistic dimension is lacking, I feel, and in the case of Georg Lukács this is very important indeed.

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Sir, - Surely George Steiner's intellectual charity towards the late Georg Lukács exceeds all reasonable bounds? It is, for instance, not really necessary to explain Lukács's Stalinism by the spell which brute power and terror often exert on the minds of scholars. In a series of brilliant and evocative essays, written as early as 1919-1922 (published in book-form in 1923 as *History and Class-Consciousness*), Lukács, in fact, established the theoretical foundations for a communist party of the Stalinist type, which was later to claim millions of victims. I hasten to add that Stalin, about whose own "Marxism" the less said the better, would probably not have understood a word of what Lukács was saying. He did not require elaborate theoretical foundations; he had machine-guns.

As for the criticism of literature, to which Lukács devoted a considerable part of his life, it is an unfortunate fact that, apart from the nineteenth-century realistic novel and its derivatives, Lukács lacked an

essential qualification: he was incapable of telling a good piece of writing from a bad one. He knew all the important names, however, and discussed the work of writers like Joyce, Proust and Kafka in terms of whether their literary techniques were "acceptable" or not - ie typical secret-police lit crit. It is difficult to escape the conclusion that his function, as regards contemporary literature, was to act as a kind of ruffian pig - to sniff out undesirable trends and individuals, for the benefit of the party, to which he remained slavishly devoted all his life, however monstrous and criminal its leadership.

His best epitaph was penned by Leszek Kolakowski, who had himself once been a leading Marxist philosopher of the Eastern bloc: "Lukács is perhaps the most striking example in the twentieth century of what may be called the betrayal of reason by those whose profession it is to use and defend it."

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John Donne

Sir, - In the TLS of October 19, 1967 ("A Donne Discovery") P. G. Stanwood printed a Latin epigram of seven elegiac couplets entitled *Ignis/Leyola Amboletas*, and beginning *Qui secer ante fuit, sanctus nunc hic est*. These verses were found ascribed to "D' Dun, Deane of Paulus" in Durham Cathedral Hunter MS 27, f 93, a miscellany compiled by Thomas Carre (d 1641), Vicar of Ayldiffe, co Durham from 1632 and chaplain to Stafford whom he attended on the scaffold. The poem, an anti-Sect satire relating to the canonization of Loyola in 1622, was regarded as an interesting addition to the Donne canon because of its apparent connection with Donne's *sanctus Ignis/Leyola Amboletas* (1611), and it was accordingly included in an appendix to T. S. Healy's edition of that work (1969, pp 174-75).

Another text of the epigram, differing somewhat from Carre's and ascribed to one "Th", was later found among William Camden's papers (though it is not in his hand) in Bodleian MS Smith 17, p 192, and was recorded by Peter Bent, *Index of English Literary Manuscripts*, Vol I (1450-1625), part 1, p 380.

The discovery of two further manuscript texts in the British Library can now support the ascription in the latter and prove that the epigram was in fact written by the Latin poet Raphael Thorus (d 1625) and has no connection with Donne. Two autograph versions by Thorus appear in, firstly, Burney MS 368, f 23, among papers of Meric

Casaubon, where it is ascribed to "R. Th.", and, secondly, in Sloane MS 1768, f 87v, the principal manuscript source for Thorus's poems.

The presence of the epigram among papers of Camden and Casaubon, who were both friends of Thorus, is easily accounted for. By the time the poem was copied out by Carre the text had been considerably corrupted. As for Carre's ascription we may remark that a contemporary, no less than a modern scholar, might naturally associate such a divine with the well-known poet and scribe who had written *Ignis/Leyola Amboletas*.

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Codswallop

Sir, - Perhaps you are humorously attempting to establish a regular spot in your correspondence columns for popular etymology by printing (Letters, January 29) one of the somewhat well-known suggestions for the origin of the word *codswallop*. But since it is made the centre-piece of an ill-humoured attack by your correspondent Colin Vines on the sixth edition of the *Concise Oxford Dictionary*, some clarification seems to be required. No reputable dictionary subscribes to the theory that the first element derives from the name of the drinks-manufacturer Codd (the Codd bottle had ceased to be current in Britain before the first recorded use of *codswallop*); no reputable dictionary records a spelling *codas*, nor indeed are there any examples in the *Oxford Dictionary* Department's extensive files (the main variant is *cod's wallop*). Amateur etymologists should credit lexicographers with having a professional interest in weighing the available evidence and rejecting the unsupported.

Your correspondent also reports finding inadequacies in COD's definitions. The elliptical style, inevitable in a dictionary so small as COD, may occasionally leave something to be desired in respect of felicity, but it is the result of an honest, and necessary attempt to combine accuracy with brevity. "Nonsense" for *codswallop* may be short, but hardly "wrong on the meaning". The same exigencies of space produce similar, if differently distributed, problems in all but the largest dictionaries. It is regrettable that the TLS should on this occasion become a forum for casual and ill-informed comments of this kind.

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Emperors of emancipation

By Peter Sedgwick

BEVERLEY R. PLACZEN (Editor): *Record of a Friendship: The Correspondence of Wilhelm Reich and A. S. Neill*. 429pp. Colnace, £12.50. 0 575 03054 2

In 1936, when he attended a lecture by A. S. Neill in Oslo, and followed it up with dinner and a chat with Neill lasting late into the night, Wilhelm Reich was in the throes of a new theoretical and experimental orientation, and with it a change of colleagues and friends, which must have offered some welcome new opportunities for re-socialization following the triple expulsion (from organized Communism, from organized psychoanalysis, and from his personal and intellectual homeland of Germany and Austria) he had undergone during 1933-34. Reich's period of sojourning in both the Communist and the Freudian movements in the 1920s and early 30s had given him an energetic role within two international collectives of radical, emancipatory intention, where his attempt to evolve common alignments between class-consciousness and sex-consciousness was fated to lead to his isolation from both of these anti-establishment establishments.

Reich came very near to success in synthesizing the claims of psychosexual reform and political militancy as challengers of the repression wrought by the existent social order. His defence of psychoanalytic method and practice, suitably amended to rehabilitate the Freudian instinct-theory and Oedipus-complex in the light of Marxist historical categories, appeared in 1929 first in the theoretical journal of the German Communist Party and then in the corresponding organ of the CPSU itself. The network of advice-centres and clinics dealing with problems of contraception, child-rearing and sexual difficulty, founded by Reich's movements in Austria and Germany between 1927 and 1932, enjoyed sympathy from the psychoanalytic as well as the party faithful. Reich indeed claimed that Freud himself to whom he had a special access in the early 1920s as a young son and prodigy of Viennese psychoanalysis, gave him direct encouragement to move out into socially organized sex-education as an alternative to analytic work with individual patients.

All the greater, then, must have been the shock for Reich when the German Communist Party opposed his sex-education work among young people and expelled him from membership in 1933: the year in which the Vienna Psychoanalytic Association, acting on behalf of Freud himself, barred Reich from further participation in its meetings because he refused to give up public lecturing before socialist and communist working-class circles. Later in the same year Freud refused to respond to the official plea from the Danish psychoanalysts in support of Reich's attempts to stay in Denmark working as their colleague. The Danish government soon revoked Reich's residence and work permit, and he moved to Sweden, until uneasy about the sensational combination of sex, politics and psychoanalysis associated with this unfamiliar guest impelled the authorities there, too, to refuse him a further stay. In 1934, the International Psychoanalytic Association stopped listing Reich as a member, probably because his recently published anti-Nazi work *The Mass Psychology of Fascism* was held to endanger the Association's German affiliate, which was still hoping to survive, if it purged itself of leftist connections, within the ambit of Hitler's Reich.

It is noteworthy that, with the exception of the brief continuation of the Sex-Pol movement outside Communist auspices until 1937, Reich never again found it possible to work in a collective organization. Following his move to the United States in 1939, the more collegial elements of his wide interests, such as the training of therapists, were devolved to

other Reichians. Instead of attracting followers and then splitting with them, as a mass school of psychoanalysis have done from Freud to Laing, Reich seems to have tried to avoid any coagulation of disciples outside the minimum of technical collaborators necessary to keep his output going. The letters to Neill are full of negative judgments about various aspirants to discipleship and the perils of any form of organization except that involved in specific work-tasks. For his own area of work Reich claimed the laboratory for research into a cosmic life-force he called Orgone Energy. Any old collaborator who refused to follow him into a new demonstration of orgone-energy effects (from the cure of disease to the alteration of weather conditions) soon found it impossible to work with Reich, who displayed an almost wilful destructiveness to any settled pattern of common enquiry.

Collegiality was distinctly absent from the laboratory at "Orgone" in Maine, where Reich assumed the primary responsibility for "seeing" the various deviant phenomena via his apparatus and for persuading juniors that they could see them as well. A confidence in the veracity of his own allegedly well-trained observations became for Reich the foremost bulwark against possible rejection or exclusion by a controlling collective. His primacy as a seer of biological and electrical effects, with a literary or artistic rather than a scientific conception of discovery, was paralleled by his development as a seer or sage in the ethical and cosmological field, again without any attempt to found an institutional heritage.

Neill's association with Reich over the long period covered by this correspondence (1936 to 1957, the year of Reich's death in a United States jail) therefore poses some interesting problems. How was it that Reich's evolution towards a tormented self, his rejection of the conventional services either for subordination to the laboratory and its technical bulletins or else for the posterity that would open up his archives, could still coexist with this warm relationship towards an independent-minded iconoclast like Neill? How, given Reich's refusal to countenance any contradiction and Neill's chirpy tendency to speak his own mind, could such a relationship have continued when other associates of Reich, including the lovers or wives who helped him in his researches, reached an irreparable point of rupture? That point was almost, perhaps, reached more than once in the relationship with Neill: Reich here suppresses the despatch of an intemperate letter to Summerhill, and there goes out of his way to fend off tension from gossip or a too-charged dialogue. Why, in Neill's case, did he take the trouble to keep up good terms, while sacrificing virtually all other long-term social bonds?

One may surmise that, in the outset of the friendship before World War Two, there was a complementary balance of crossed dominance and subordination (Neill as Reich's patient, but also as Reich's senior in the sexual-reform cause), which seems to have evened out as a familiarity of equals. Neill's priority as an anti-authoritarian evangelist, tracing the origin of all wars to the misery of individuals, and of these miseries to a coercive upbringing, was offset by his eager apprenticeship to Reich in practical matters of treatment-technique. He adopted the Reichian "character analysis" (later termed "vegetotherapy") and involving a zealous intervention against the patient's muscular rigidities for use with adolescents at Summerhill, and while professing agnosticism about the more recondite reaches of Reich's transition, already under way at the time of their Oslo meeting, from a maverick genre of psychoanalysis to a comprehensive attempt to re-shape biology and physics.

Fortunately for Reich's overpowering sense of scientific proprietorship, Neill's divergencies from the true path of ergonomic discovery posed no threat to their evolving harmony. Neill, after all, was a professional educator using Reichian methods as an applied art: he claimed no expertise in laboratory techniques, and never raised the most elementary query about Reich's grasp of biology or other sciences. To Reich's incessant pressure on him to get hold of an Orgone Accumulator - the cupboard lined with metal on the inside and wood on the outside, inside which all true Reichians sat daily for the sake of their psychic and physical health - Neill offered the excuses of wartime shortage of materials and, when Reich had one shipped across the Atlantic to him, blamed its inefficacy firstly on the moisture-absorption of the layers he had added in it, and then on the dampness of the English climate. Either duplicity or a degree of veneration prevented him from voicing any frontal criticism of "orgone biophysics". He did express some honest doubts, both about the explanatory value of the new theories and about Reich's tendency to see the hand of Moscow in all the ills of American politics, even the Red-baiting of the McCarthy era. Such doubts were permitted to nobody else in Reich's circle.

Neill himself had to display an unusual magnanimity towards Reich when the latter, confronted with the refusal of the United States government to allow his British friend an entry-visa during the 1950s, first claimed that it was merely a temporary delay due to hostility from Catholics in the State Department, then defended the "rational and justified" fear of communist espionage which had impelled such travel restrictions. Not even these continuing impediments to meeting with his old friend, who had never been a communist, could prevent Neill from shaking Reich's faith in the innocence of American administrations. All the oppressive elements of his new country, from the McCarthy scare to the machinations of the Food and Drug Administration which in 1957 secured his imprisonment, were put down by Reich to the external forces of "Red fascism". In one letter to Neill (June 14, 1955) quoted from the recipient's file by Reich's widow

Ilse Ollendorff Reich - but not included by Dr Beverley Placzen in the present collection formed from Reich's archive - there is a suggestion that pressure from the large American drug companies had something to do with the FDA's interventions: but these corporations were still "in collusion with and incited by Russian Red Fascism".

In preparing these letters for publication, Dr Placzen has undertaken some abridgement of "repetitions" and "redundancies". One wonders if the fuller text of Reich's own letters would make him look a little less composed than he appears to be in *Record of a Friendship*. He does seem to have displayed the sanest, healthiest parts of his personality to Neill, in whom he effected much encouragement and support in the trying times that afflicted any sexual emancipator in the pre-permissive epoch.

Most movingly, the two veterans of anti-authoritarian militancy found a common conviction for their inability to persuade the habit-ridden multitudes. The new generation of infants as yet untouched by repressive indoctrination, offered a far better prospect for unregulated sexuality and healthful sessions in the Orgone Accumulator. The dotting, late-career fathers of Peter Reich (born 1944) and Zeel Neill (born 1946) swapped anecdotes and anxieties about their marvellous offspring. Neill tried to convince Reich, from across the Atlantic, that four-year old Peter was restless through being allowed to stay up too late at night. Reich insisted that childhood insomnia, even in the two-year-old Zeel, was entirely due to dammed-up sexuality. As innovating parents the pair took themselves altogether too seriously, yet somehow captured a sense of play and fun from the children whose early activities occupy so many of these letters.

The maintenance and upkeep of long friendships is a taxing, humbling business especially between friends proud and committed to their own separate standpoint on matters they each regard as vital. The record of this friendship, extending over twenty years through powerful disagreement and lengthy separation, reflects

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Egghead earnings

By Philip Thody

HERVÉ HAMON and PATRICK ROTMAN.
Les Indicateurs: Expédition en haute intelligence. 331pp. Paris: Ramsay.

If the facts that Hervé Hamon and Patrick Rotman have brought back from their foray into the Porcelain Palace, which has St Germain-des-Près as its parish church and the Brasserie Lipp as its local hostelry are correct, French intellectuals do themselves pretty well. A monthly income of £800 is way below the average; between £20,000 and £30,000 a year is not uncommon; and a fair number of the ninety-five intellectuals who answered the authors' question about money (one hundred were asked) make more than £30,000 a year (before tax, presumably).

There are the perks as well, of course. You would be doing pretty badly out of semiology, social history or Marxist revisionism if you had to buy a meal for yourself on a working day, or to pay for the transatlantic telephone calls you made to arrange your round-the-world lecture tour.

At Guy de Maupassant's funeral, in addition to being a member of the Académie Goncourt and a critic with *Le Poin* and *Le Figaro* Magazine, is also on the editorial committee at Editions Grasset.

All this and the heaven of people actually listening to you: as well. Perhaps not surprisingly, Sartre made the highest score in the petition-signing stakes: ninety-one signed, between 1958 and 1969 alone. Simone de Beauvoir wasn't far behind with seventy-two, Vladimir Jankélévitch made sixty-three, Claude Roy thirty-eight and Marguerite Duras thirty-seven. We don't know what effect any of this had, any more than we are given any indication of who buys the books, newspapers and periodicals from which all this money presumably comes. But Hamon and Rotman make up for this omission by being very hot on what would, in the days when clerks were in holy orders, have been known as the plurality of benefices.

Everyone knows, of course, that Raymond Aron holds posts at the Collège de France, at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes and at the weekly *L'Express*, but unless you make a point of watching Bernard Henri Lévy having lunch and holding court every day at the Twickenham ("the English" pub at the corner of the rue de Grenelle and the rue des Saints-Pères), you may not be as well informed about the helping hand he has given over the years to his fellow Old Boys from the lycée Louis-le-Grand. Neither would you know about how Francis Noûs, a member of the Académie Goncourt and a critic with *Le Poin* and *Le Figaro* Magazine, is also on the editorial committee at Editions Grasset.

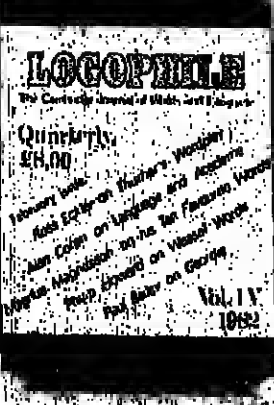
credit on both participants: but perhaps more on Neill, because he had so much more to tolerate in Reich's erratic hstres and enthusiasms, and at the same time gave of himself with far less defensiveness and ceremony. But when Reich left himself unbent, he said some very charming things to Neill. Here is his message to his British friend just after they had parted in 1948: "When you left, there was quite a gap at Organn. There was no emperor figure, walking slowly and meditatively up the road towards the lab, there was no one playing around with the lathe and envying me for being it; there was no one I could cease with Stalin and no one to pour drags into. Well, we shall have it again.

But of course they never did have the drinks again, nor the arguments about Stalin. Reich's last letter to Neill in February 1957, was written a few weeks before the final court hearing in Maine from which he was led out in handcuffs, and a few months after the agents of the Food and Drug Administration had dumped into the New York City incinerator all of Reich's orgone books and bulletins they could find, along with the impounded copies of *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, *Character Analysis*, *The Sexual Revolution* and *The Murder of Christ*. Inside the federal penitentiary, Reich still stated his conviction that the planes which overflew the building were offering personal protection and encouragement from the President of the United States himself. Later in the same year he was found dead in his cell, the autopsy diagnosis being sudden heart failure.

Despite the woolly grandiosity of his later theorizing, Reich should be celebrated and commended, because of his refusal to separate what are conventionally seen as dualities: health and disorder of mind, health and disorder of body; individual illness, social oppression, the personal and the political. In his effort to maintain this work of integration, he suffered his own, very partial disintegration. With A. S. Neill he found a humane and serious helper. This record of their correspondence is one of a very special understanding in the midst of society's hideous mis-understanding.

So if you want to know "who loses and who wins; who's in, who's out" in the current French intellectual world, this is the book to read. It won't tell you who wrote what, who thinks what, or who sleeps with whom (a pity, that; I'm sure that sex can't have been quite so sublimated into the power drive, even in France). It doesn't have an index either. To work out all the details of how Galtimard, Grasset and Le Seuil prizes, you will need to spend a fair amount of time taking notes on a bit of paper as you read. But it does tell you what the literary equivalent of the Michael Parkinson show is (Bernard Fivort's *Apotrophes*), how much Olivier Todd received for his *Les rebelle* (70,000 NF = £7,000; not bad), how Lévy's *L'Idolâtre* franchise was launched (slovely), and who MM Hamon and Rotman think is the best critic writing in French today (Angelo Rinaldi).

Simone Weil: Interpretations of a life, edited by George Abbot White (207 pp. University of Massachusetts Press, \$18, paperback, \$7.50. 0 87023 343 2) has recently been published. The editor has contributed an introduction and two essays, "Simone Weil's work experience" and "Simone Weil's Bibliography". Other essays include "The Life and Death of Simone Weil" by J. M. Cameron, "Patristic and Theological for *Rebelle*" by The Antipolitics of Simone Weil" by Conon Cruise O'Brien, and a biographical essay by Michele Murray. "The Jagged Edge"



Debating society

By Rodney Needham

IAN LANGHAM

The Building of British Social Anthropology
W. H. R. Rivers and his Cambridge Disciples in the Development of Kinship Studies, 1898-1931
392pp. Dordrecht: Reidel.
0 277 1264 6

Among the more or less bizarre characters who have marked the development of social anthropology the retiring figure of W. H. R. Rivers, FRS, attracts a singular sympathy and respect. Contemporary accounts and the testimony of his publications combine to picture a man admirable for his level-headed intelligence, theoretical originality, professional industry, and simple decency. He made his chief contributions, moreover, in the field of "kinship", the only branch of the subject in which it has proved feasible to approach the standards of an exact science. A major monograph on Rivers and his influence on the study of social organization is hence more than welcome, and Ian Langham, a historian at the University of Sydney, has composed an account that is solid and often quite engrossing.

His book is the product of apparently a decade's labour, including research in no fewer than eight manuscript collections in four countries, and it is full of novel and interesting details about connections among persons and events. (It is a pity, however, that he did not come across the intellectual biography of Rivers presented by John Mack as a DPhil thesis at Oxford in 1975.) If some of his main contentions are made dubitable by his premises and his plan of investigation, these uncertainties have to do with standing hazards in the history of science: they are not peculiar to his undertaking, and they do not impair the value of his findings in other regards.

The historical problem that Langham poses is: "By what process did the study of kinship and social organization replace the evolution of religious thought as the central thread of anthropological theory?" His argument is that it was Rivers, more than any other, who turned the attention of British anthropologists to the syncretic functioning of single societies, and that he did so primarily by making kinship studies central to the discipline. According to "the real subject of the book is the school of Cambridge Ethnology, in which the leading intellectual figure was W. H. R. Rivers." Langham thinks that the modern academic anthropologist probably has no idea of the extent to which his "value-system" was created by Rivers, and only the vaguest idea about the historical pedigree of the centrality of kinship; "little does he realize that, for British anthropology, the real milestones were firstly Rivers's empirical discovery that kinship plays a crucial role in aboriginal social organization and, secondly, Rivers's and Haddon's successful promotion of a scientific ideology which pushed kinship studies to the centre of anthropological theory and practice." The concluding lines of the book endorse Sol Tax's view (published in 1937) that it was Rivers who, "almost single-handed, made research into the social organization of tribes what it is today."

In presenting his case, Langham adopts what he calls a "sociological" approach, in that he concentrates on the "form of interaction" among members of the Cambridge School: this is where his painstaking research into surviving "correspondence" is especially productive. Nevertheless, he has written a history which quite deliberately takes sides "about the rights and wrongs of certain actions and about the motives of the participants; this makes for a provocative quality that is not usual in the recent history of ideas. The main part of the relation story is related only thirty years from the time of the publication of Rivers's survey of the social organization of Australia

tribes in 1931, but a great deal of significance happened in this time.

Langham is particularly informative about the consequences, as seen in the interplay of personalities and academic politics, of Rivers's conversion to diffusion, but he places greater stress on the structural interpretation of the institutions of Ambrym, a small island in the New Hebrides. Rivers first tried to make sense of the Ambrym system after a visit there in 1914, yet it was not until Deacon's investigation in early 1927 that anthropologists became persuaded of the existence of a six-action system on the island. Langham regards this progress as a demonstration of the "technical proficiency" of the Rivers school, and he makes the Ambrym system the "test case" in which social anthropology proved itself. To a specialist this makes an intensely interesting narrative, and one that is to be had in such detail thanks almost solely to Langham's work in the archives.

Another achievement of the kind, involving a minute investigation of correspondence, newspaper clippings, and one or two assessments of Radcliffe-Brown's scientific career until 1931 which constitutes the final substantive chapter. Langham characterizes Radcliffe-Brown as "the first real professional in British anthropology," but in estimating the actual work of this famous pupil of Rivers he none the less sees his task as being to separate out "the mixture of fact, falsehood and half-truth" that makes up the obfuscating legend propagated by Radcliffe-Brown himself. There is much plain speaking in this chapter, beginning with an estimation of Radcliffe-Brown's work in the Andamans and centring on an extended proof that "his retrospective claim about discovering the Kariara system seems to have been the product either of wishful reminiscence or of wilful fabrication."

All in all, this is a diligent and worthwhile historical investigation of one strand of anthropological thought; focused on one university in a limited but important period, and it will readily hold professional attention. It is not so likely to prove instructive to those who specialize in the fairly technical field within which its subject falls. A few particular comments will indicate the line of probable criticism.

No one would dispute Langham's decision to focus on Cambridge and Rivers, but to do so puts an extremely local construction on what is essentially an international scientific development; and for all the greatness of Rivers he was after all one of a widespread community of scholars (as he himself easily recognized) including, for example, Sternberg in Russia, Starek in Denmark, Kohler in Germany, Wilken in the Netherlands, Durkheim in France, Kroeber in the United States, Fison, Howitt, Mathews, and Strehlow in Australia, and many others. It might well be contended that in the history of a science it is the ideas that should preponderate, rather than a few persons, and in fact the Cambridge "school" comprised only a handful of

individuals, even if these did include some so remarkable as Layard, Armstrong, Barnard, and Deacon. Against a wider scholarly background, and its advance of collaborative thought, the concentration on this little band seems rather parochial.

Certainly the claim that Rivers discovered the crucial role of kinship cannot be sustained, and it is no mere truism that he was responsible for professional standards of technical proficiency. Rivers himself conceded primacy to J. Kohler's *Zur Geschichte der Ehe* (1897), a work which, as A. M. Hocutt justly wrote, "will delight all those who enjoy mathematical precision." Langham alludes to Kohler at one place, and refers to Radcliffe-Brown for a critical discussion of that work but he fails to mention the exemplary English edition (Chicago, 1975) with its fundamental editorial critique by R. H. Barnes. He touches approvingly on Radcliffe-Brown's purported corrections to Howitt's list of Diel relations in kinship terms, but he does not adduce the demonstration by Francis Korn (in her *Elementary Structures*

Reconsidered, 1973) that the alterations were erroneous and actually impaired the systematic coherence of the evidence. Radcliffe-Brown's paper on the mother's brother in South Africa (1924) is said to have since been accepted by the anthropological world as a model analysis, whereas in fact it has repeatedly been shown, by Jack Goody and others, to be fallacious. Bateson is cited, in an assimilation to Rivers, on the contrary marriage rules of famul sociality, but the reader is not told of the beautifully cogent analysis of this system published in 1971 by Korn.

On the other hand, when Langham expresses his own opinions on technical matters, he is by no means always reliable. He disparages Andrew Lang for his "general ineptitude in matters requiring technical proficiency," but these words cannot truly be applied to Lang's acute observations on section systems, marriage rules, and relationship terminologies. Harrison White is praised for "the most impressive attempt yet made to formulate a general theory of relationship systems," yet no hint is given that the

Structuring Gallic man

By Maurice Bloch

MARC AUGÉ

The Anthropological Circle
Symbol, Function, History
Translated by Martin Thom
131pp. Cambridge University Press.
£12.50 (paperback, £4.95).
0 521 22326 8

The Anthropological Circle is a translation of a study in French concerning the many and varied theoretical currents in modern French anthropology. It is a book which should be useful, but which, I suspect, not succeed with its potential readers.

The reasons why it should be useful are many. Marc Augé is an extremely perceptive critic of the theories employed by his colleagues and his criticisms are unusually constructive. Unlike many of his compatriots he makes a genuine effort to see what is valuable in the work of others and in traditions which are not his own. This enables him to look fairly at what he defines as the three main theoretical streams in anthropology. The first is functionalism, which for him means explanation in terms of the use of institutions for the maintenance of the social system. This tendency is rather oddly typified here by the work of Victor Turner. The second is structuralism, which is explained in terms of underlying relations between symbols and concepts. This is examined in the work of Lévi-Strauss. The third is Marxism, which is concerned with evolutionary

explanations in terms of determination by the economic infrastructure, however visualized, and this trend is exemplified by the works of Godelier, Terray, Meillassoux and Rey.

Augé tries to place those and other, older views within a matrix composed by a double axis between symbolism and function and evolution and culture respectively. Without going into the niceties of the argument, what Augé is telling us is that anthropology is repeatedly caught between the alternatives of devoting itself to the translation of unique cultural phenomena and of looking at these phenomena in general terms, so that they can be compared as part of a general anthropological theory. The identification of this dilemma is hardly very original, but there is no doubt that an analysis of all the various writers concerned in the same general terms is extremely thought-provoking and helpful when done as skillfully as it is here. I felt again and again that Augé succeeded in isolating the crucial element in often rather vague theories.

The rest of the book consists principally of two other interesting, if loosely connected, chapters. Augé deals critically with the notion, peddled by various quasi-anthropologists, that primitive societies have a totally different purity, value or genuineness which contrasts absolutely with our own degenerate world. This is because they are variously seen as pre-capitalist or pre-ideological or even pre-odipal. This kind of claptrap, used by unwary nationalists and psychoanalysts, finds its origin in careless, attention-seeking work by a number of French anthropologists who are here roundly, and quite rightly, denounced. This is not only because what they say is false but also because of the political implications of such "romantic primitivism". The book also contains short discussions of the relation of anthropology to colonialism and imperialism, and a consideration of possible cooperation between anthropology and other social sciences, especially history. The link-up between anthropology and history has, of course, been highly successful in France.

In spite of all this very perceptive, if somewhat inconclusive, analysis, I very much doubt that this book will be much read in its English translation. The first problem is its style and presentation. The original French was already difficult, but the most convoluted sentences in English do not help. Here is an example of what the reader will have to tackle:

Turner's great virtue (in this respect he belongs to an established tradition in British anthropology) lies in his suggesting what a property

premises and procedures of his treatise have been repeatedly rejected and disproved by Leach, Korn, and others. Buchler and Selby are cited as "authorities" on the criteria of an Iroquois system, though they would not generally be accepted as such, and especially not after Lowie's demolition of this type of system in 1917. As a final instance, Langham thinks that by 1931 "there was a limit to how far the world's kinship systems could be coherently analyzed and meaningfully classified"; but there is no foreseeable limit to analysis, which indeed is constantly developing, and it is highly contestable that the theoretical aim ought to be the classification of systems.

Langham says of the conclusion of the period under study that social anthropology, and particularly its subdiscipline of kinship studies, "became the preserve of the technically competent." On the whole, he himself does quite commendably in providing simple expositions of theoretical issues, but more fundamentally he is let down by the unavailing fact that on this crucial point he is absolutely right.

A different problem comes from the way in which Augé merely alludes to writers and their works rather than quoting directly what they are saying. This leaves the reader with a feeling of vagueness and distance, heightened by the fact that certain key words such as "symbolism" or "functionalism" seem to be used very loosely - at least, they are never defined. This is particularly serious in a translation since the meaning of some of these words is often somewhat different in French and English and this type of difference is notoriously misleading in polemical writing.

Most disturbing of all, however, is the fact that the book is not only principally about French anthropology, which is all to the good, but that it is written for French anthropologists. Augé is always referring to writers, anthropologists and others, who are barely, if at all, known here, without telling us what they are saying. He is therefore likely to lose all but the best-informed readers. He repeatedly alludes in passing to knowledge familiar enough to French but not to English speakers, such as, for example, the school manuals used to teach the history of French literature, or lines from Mallarmé. I suspect that anyone who can handle such "in-talk" would be able to read the French original.

Most English-speaking readers will derive from this book a feeling that much French anthropology is insular. Augé makes some effort to refer to non-French works but he does not seem to be really familiar with British and American anthropologists and so misses highly relevant books discussing the very topics he deals with.

The Anthropological Circle appears in a series published jointly by Cambridge University Press and the Maison des Sciences de l'Homme in Paris. The series is intended to facilitate Anglo-French exchanges, but I feel that this would have been better served if Augé had rewritten his book after a long stay here. British anthropologists are extremely interested in the development of their subject in France but they are too often put off, as here, by quite unnecessary difficulties.

A way out of the mind

By Alan Brownjohn

SYLVIA PLATH

Collected Poems
Edited by Ted Hughes
351pp. Faber. £10 (paperback, £4.25).
0 571 11838 0

At the time, her literary reputation seemed as new and unscoured as the face which smiled out from the photograph alongside a tribute in the *Observer* the Sunday after she died. Now, nearly nineteen years later, it is difficult to remember that Sylvia Plath was once not a legend. It is almost impossible to recover a clear memory of the impression made by her poetry in that brief period between the appearance of *The Colossus* in October 1960 and her death by her own hand on February 11, 1963. But the chronological order of the comprehensive and definitive *Collected Poems* enables us to make the attempt.

Certainly *The Colossus* was accorded little more (on either side of the Atlantic) than a warily respectful welcome, for a first volume of poems crafted with more than usual skill and charged with undeniable ingenuity and surprise. In the months after it was published - receiving no special awards or accolades - there were hints in the poems appearing in magazines, of an increasing power and alarm in her work; and what was printed and broadcast soon after her death confirmed the indications of astonishing change and development. Yet it needed the publication in 1965 of *Ariel*, the first posthumous volume (a book she had herself planned, arranged and titled, though in the event it appeared in a slightly different form) to establish beyond question the magnitude and originality of her talents.

Since then, of course, the literary reputation has been deplorably overlaid by the myth. Some critics were to identify in Sylvia Plath a species of romantic agony appropriate to the enormities of the age. "To those who know her and to the greatly enlarged circle who were electrified by her last poems and sudden death," she had come to signify the specific hostilities and risks of the poet's condition, wrote George Storer. Much of what has been written and thought about Plath has been coloured and weakened by such romantic embellishments of a suffering that was in fact "specific" only to her, and not to be regarded as a prerequisite for artists in general, even in the years following the Holocaust and the Vietnam war. She employed, in a few famous poems, the most terrible and unforgettable imagery of the camps; but she wrote more frequently and more poignantly about love, jealousy, motherhood, place, and what a very different observer of twentieth-century ignominies, Kurt Vonnegut, once called "good old ordinary death".

Not all of the detailed criticism produced by the sort of industry which attaches itself to any highly talented and well-publicized artist has been bad in the case of Sylvia Plath. But most of it has been magnificently and unhelpfully drawn to the circumstances of her life and death, and biased in interpretation and appraisal by the poet's own choice of icons and demons. More than any other poet of our time she dictated, altogether unconsciously, the terms on which her work would be approached by most of her critics after she died. As a result, even when the tone of their criticism is civilized and its method attentive, the context in which they feel compelled to pursue their task has often proved overwhelming for them. The recurrent symbols, the favoured stock of references, above all the important east of family and connections, stand too vividly at their shoulders.

But when the tone of the writing about Sylvia Plath is merely emotional, and the method tendentious, something infinitely worse has happened. There is a branch of the

Plath industry which treats her life and poetry as material for the advancement of theories and causes. In its open manifestations this must be one of the shabbiest, most distressing and least useful phenomena ever conjured up to explain and celebrate an important artistic talent. In its more "underground" manifestations, some of its paranoid rhetoric and bland savagery has been despicable. The privacy of poetry as an art somehow exposes it to distortions more profound and more painful than most other modes of utterance. No writing in our time has suffered more than Plath's from hysterical, ignorant misuse.

Had she lived, Plath would have protected and advanced her own reputation thoroughly and scrupulously, as she can be seen to be doing in her published letters, and as is clear from the account given in Ted Hughes's introduction to this edition. "From quiet early," he writes, "she began to assemble her poems into a prospective collection which at various times she presented - always hopeful - to publishers and to the judging committees of contests. She wanted to succeed, and she was known to be talented. Her driving competitiveness, so clear in the *Letters Home* to her mother, Aurelia Schober Plath, and so evident to friends and teachers, led her to regard all her finished poems as either suitable or unsuitable candidates for a possible book. The imagined volume itself changed titles many times: after several inappropriate early shots it became successively *The Earthenware Head*, *The Everlasting Monday*, *Full Fathom Five*, *The Bull of Bendyland*, *The Devil of the Stairs*, and finally *The Colossus*.

Rejection of the manuscript by a publisher meant changes and adjustments, but new poems were written, poems which either qualified as "book poems" and replaced others, or failed a personal test of suitability.

The Collected Poems provides an opportunity to follow this constant and scrupulous process of assessment and selection. One could begin reading with the last section of the book, a choice of fifty of her surviving 220 or so juvenilia, to trace the progress of her talent from its earliest stages; then pass to the long parade of poems that begins in early 1956 with "Conversation Among the Ruins" and continues through the period of the *Colossus* poems, ending in December 1959; then take in the work selected for *Crossing the Water* and *Winter Trees*, books published in England in 1971; and end with the poems of *Ariel*, already overlapping with the contents of these other two posthumous volumes. This large body of mature work consists of 224 poems. Rumours about a very large number of unpublished Plath poems should now be killed by the knowledge that out of the seventy-nine of the 224 here appearing in a book for the first time, nearly seventy belong to two years from which she drew poems for *The Colossus*, and were therefore rejected by Plath herself for the purposes of her first published volume.

The introduction makes admirably clear the principles by which the *Collected Poems* is edited and arranged, and the "Notes on Poems 1956-1963" allow, wherever possible, the poet's own explanations and statements of intention (often they are from broadcast scripts) to be used. These Notes are lucid and helpful, and appropriately economical and factual.

The fifty juvenilia come largely from "the three or four years preceding 1956" and the chronological order must be conjectured. The interest here might lie in what they suggest and anticipate of the future; what can be read into them with the wisdom of hindsight. But most batches of the juvenilia of lending poets studied in isolation would convey very little of what was to follow, and Sylvia Plath's are no exception. We learn that many of them were written as "class assignments for the English professor at Smith College, Alfred Young Fisher. . . . In most cases, she seems to have accepted his textual suggestions". It would be interesting to know what some of these suggestions were, and how much the process of encouragement - probably more important than individual bits of practical advice - helped her. One could hazard, from the number, variety, and technical rigour of these poems, that it helped quite a lot.

The juvenilia look like a very thorough rehearsal for the altogether more confident and complex poems that begin to appear quite suddenly in 1956, in England. Few are striking or moving or original; they have the required accomplishment and good manners of much "academic" American poetry of the 1950s. Strict form - there are several villanelles (she does not vary the meaning of the repeated lines, thus remaining quite un-Emersonian) and many sonnets - was good practice for her, but not an inspiration. There are not many unexpected changes of direction, or leaps into a new maturity of technique or of imagination; though something of the kind nearly happens in "Two Lovers and a Beachcomber by the Real Sea", a poem she liked for a long time and thought of as providing a possible title for a book:

Two lovers and a beachcomber by the real sea,
Two lovers and a beachcomber by the real sea,
Two lovers and a beachcomber by the real sea,
Two lovers and a beachcomber by the real sea.

That chuckles in backyard of the wave;
Though the mind like an oyster labors on
and on.
A grain of sand is all we have
Water will run by rule; the actual sea
Will scrupulously tie and untie;
No little man lives in the exorbitant moon
And that is that, is that, is that.
Influences are evident, in the attempt at Auden-esque epithets ("actual" and "exacting"), or the lyrical voice and formal dexterity of Richard Wilbur; but something more ominous, and characteristic, is trying to force its way out of these rather rough lambies. The last line is the first instance in her work of that triple reiteration which you hear so often in the late poems ("It can sew it can cook, it can talk, talk, talk.") All the same, most of these early exercises suggest a young poet manipulating - her own later word for

her method - images and sensations which she could not, or did not yet wish, to feel intensely. The difference comes when she was ready to make that kind of emotional commitment to her material.

From the years 1956-59, 121 poems survive; virtually all of those she wrote. Since she destroyed hardly anything, *The Colossus*, in its English edition, contained forty-four of them, though they are a slightly different group from those listed in the concordance to this *Collected*. (No 121, and dating from November 1959) they are, with few exceptions, the best of the poems she wrote during those years. It proves her judgment and tact in selecting and arranging her own work: she is leaving out the mere exercises, the slight and descriptive excursions (such as "Alienated Lullaby", No 27, or "In Midland Country", No 80) which she could do easily; and she knows what her (infrequent) dull poems were. Among the rejects which might fairly be regretted was the "Fable of the Rhododendron Strollers" (No 85), which shows her ability to choose and order physical detail and enclose it without strain in a fanciful narrative framework with a point; everything is vibrant, observed, questioning; should she be the stalker of single rosebuds, or of whole bunches of the grosser flower?

Musk satisfied my nose, red my eye.
The petals' nap my fingertips;
I considered the poetry I recued
From blind air, from complete eclipse.
Yet today, a yellow bud in my hand,
I stilled at sudden noisy crashes
From the laurel thicket. No one
approached.
A spasm took the rhododendron bushes:
Three girls, engrossed, were wrenching
Of cerise and pink from the rhododendron;
Mountaining them on spread newspaper.
They brassily picked, slowed by no
chagrin.
And wouldn't pause for my strident look.
But gave me pause, my rose a charge,
Whether nicely stood clomounded by
love.
Or petty shiver by large.

The absence from *The Colossus* of another little candidate, on the other hand, "The Lady and the Earthenware Head", is hardly to be mourned:
No place it seemed, for the effigy to fare
Free from all molesting, Rough boys
Spying a pale to spare
Glowing sullen and pompous from an
ash-heap.
Might well seize this prize,
Maltreat the hostage head in shocking
wise.
And waken the sly nerve up
That knits to each original its coarse
copy.
- "too fancy, glossy, patchy and rigid"
- it embarrasses me now -
Plath's later verdict on this, which she had once thought to be her best poem. Quite true; and astutely self-critical about the weaker ones among the poems she was then writing. The weird, slightly archaic formality of the lines suggest not just the clear

debt to John Crowe Ransom's own beautiful and amazing poem "Painted Head", but a Ransom influence that found its way into the tone and diction of several of her poems, even some good ones ("Spinster" in particular) that were included in the book. Elsewhere she shows a most unexpected concern to think her poems through in honest dullness, as in "Tide of a Tub", from 1956:

always the ridiculous nude flanks urge
the fabrication of some cloth to cover
such starkness; accuracy must not stalk at
each day demands we create our white
work over,
disguising the constant horror in a coat
of many-colored fictions; we mask our
past
in the green of eden, pretend future's
shining future
can sprout from the navel of this present
wink.
- "the constant horror" of
the physical body was to receive attention
in another kind of voice in the
poems of *Ariel*.

What was the nature of the talent evident in *The Colossus*, which the critics missed; or in a few cases tentatively noticed? The book was re-proached for its length; but it undoubtedly earned its size, having a sustained imaginative power far beyond that of most first volumes. Sometimes the remarkable vigour and inventiveness is employed in poems which read like highly accomplished exercises. "Point Shirley" (No 10) knew to be influenced by Robert Lowell's writing classes. "The Eye-Mote" suggests that she felt uneasy about just recording the physical sensation of a splinter flying into her eye ("Thou I was seeing / A melding of shapes in a hot rain: / Horses warped on the altering green, / Outlandish as doubled-lumped camels or unicorns") - and wanted to elevate the whole venture with her Oedipus analogy ("What I want back is what I was / Before the bed, before the knife, / Before the beach-pin." / Even something much earlier than "All the Dead Days", about the museum coffin which contains the skeletons of a woman, a mouse and a shrew - "The ank-bone of the woman has been slightly gnawed" - strains too thoroughly to give flesh and horror to the *memento mori* contained in the relic, with a final stanza of awkward hyperbole: "Any taste, touch, laugh / Fit for those outlaws. To ride home on, / And to sanctuary: usurping the armchair between tick / And tick of the clock, until we go, / Each skulking and croaking the Gulliver, / Riddled with ghosts, to lie / Deadlocked with them, taking root as credulous rock.

But the best ten or so poems - about which there might now be broad critical agreement - should have suggested the presence of outstanding gifts.

In this list the poems which point forward to personal anguish and desolation, to the theme of suicide; are present, but they do not predominate. Always Sylvia Plath's imagery has an edge of danger and night-mare; yet "The Thin People" and "Mushrooms", even "Suicide on Egg Rock", continue to externalize the fear, and "Two Views of a Cadaver Room" finds a small, vulnerable yet intensely real space of life among death, where the activity of the figures described is, significantly, love and art:

In Breughel's panorama of smoke and slaughter
Two people only are blind to the carrion army.
He, silent in the sea of her blue satin
Skirt, slugs in the direction
Of her bare shoulder, while she bends,
Fingering a leaflet of music, over him.

In two justly-praised poems, "Hardcastle Crags" and "Black Rook in Rainy Weather", where she writes in the long, eager sentences of this period yet contains her material firmly within a reinforcing stanza-scheme, she similarly turns back from a looming external world (this time a world of nature that seems "indifferent" or "ruthless") to an affirmation of her individuality in the one poem, and an affirmation of

Halloween

Someone was playing the piano, when suddenly
there they were standing in the room.
They would not blink or speak or tell their names.
Their skull faces blankly shifted round
as if they were studying us intently.

"Yokels", one thought. "Rustics", thought another;
and truly they had trudged in out of the rain
with their minks, tall and white and bony-looking.
"Macbeth", someone said, and someone "Hamlet".
Or perhaps at least the "Elegy" by Gray.

The rain drummed on the roof and they were gone
in their muddy boots, quaking past covering doors.
We looked at each other. It was graveyard time
as our black ties on our white shirts might say.

Iain Crichton Smith

poetry in the other. In "Black Book":

I only know that a book
Ordering its feathers can as shine
My eyelids up, and grant
Or total neutrality.

The omen is tamed, not unleashed,
welcomed like the visitation of an
angel offering the "largesse, honour"
of creative visions. In "Watercolour
of Granchester Meadows" she is at
her most dextrously fanciful,
sketching the calm miniature of a
landscape where death ("The owl
shall stoop from his turret") is a very
distant, gothic prospect: "It is a
country on a nursery plot / Hedging
meadows of benign / Arcadian
green / The blood-berried
hawthorn hides its spines with
white."

Among only the finest of the Col-
ossus poems, "The Disquieting
Muses" and "Lorelei" draw us de-
cisively down into the darkness of
the late poems (though even here
her imagery has not turned indoors,
to the frightening claustrophobia of
"An Appearance" or "The Munich
Mennequins").

It is no light to drown in:
A full moon, river rising
Black beneath bland mirror-sheen.
The line water-mists dropping
Scrim after scrim like fabrics
Though fishermen are sleeping

"Lorelei!"
"Scrim" is a light fabric or netting
used in upholstery: here is Plath's
weird exorcism of comparison again,
but this is still far from the recurrent
sick-room images of 1961 and after-
wards.

In *The Colossus*, then, her options
still seem relatively open as to the
eventual direction of her writing. Af-
ter its publication, the year 1960 is
something of a watershed; only
eleven poems are written, and only
one of them, the happy, lyrical
"You're", about the child she was
carrying, was chosen from them for a

new volume (to be *Ariel*). But there-
after, beginning early in 1961 (the
year in which she also wrote *The
Bell Jar*), came an astonishing accel-
eration into the themes and manner
of her final poems. Some of the new
poems still bear the stamp of exer-
cises or excursions ("Zoo Keeper's
Wife" is a particularly scary little
tour de force); but with "Tulips" she
has become both more pro-
foundly frightening and more fluent,
the cadences beginning to shatter
towards the brief, violent lines of
"The Other" or "Daddy".

The tulips are too red in the first place.
they hurt me.
Even through the gift paper I could hear
them breathe
Lightly, through their light swaddlings,
like an awful baby.
Their redness talks to my wound, it cor-
responds.

They are subtle, they seem to float...
Increasingly the poems seem to be
made (she felt this to be an essential
element in their composition) to be
said aloud, the voice angry, insistent,
eloquent. The sickening maze of
both crude and moving effects she
achieves in "The Surgeon at 2 a.m."
anticipates the prevailing mood of
many of the *Ariel* poems (where the
imagery is harsh, clear and almost
unbearably poignant): "It is a statue
the orderlies are wheeling off. / I
have perfected it. / I am left with an
arm or a leg, / A set of teeth, or
stones / To rattle in a bottle."

In the verse Sylvia Plath wrote in
the last year of her life, a particular
way of handling images constitutes
her most original contribution to
poetry. Although it is only part of her
wider achievement. On to a natural
world, already observed and re-
animated in her words, she imposes
frightening images from the world of
man to produce an extra dimension
of terror or pathos. Almost auto-
matically, the natural phenomena
with which she contended and con-
cluded an uneasy truce in her earlier
poems, acquire an inescapable, stif-
fening menace. There is a continual,

agonized, brilliant conflation of the
external world and the inner world
of an anguish wholly characteristic of
our age. In "Apprehensions" she
asks:

Is there no way out of the mind?
Steps at my back spiral into a well.
There are no trees or birds in this world,
There is only a sourness.
The "sourness" comes in a profusion
of uneasy images: "This is the sea,
then, this great expanse. / How the
sun's polio-draws on my in-
firmation." ("Berck-Plage"); "But
my god, the clouds are like cotton,
Armies of them. They are carbon
monoxide." ("A Birthday Present");
"Hothouse baby in his crib. / The
ghastly orchid / Hanging its hanging
garden in the air" ("Fever 103").

And in "Edge", her last poem of all:
Each dead child coiled, a white serpent,
One at each little
Pitcher of milk, now empty.
She has folded
Them back into her body as petals
Of a rose close when the garden
Stiffens and odors bleed
From the sweet deep throats of the night
flower.

She speaks in such images, if not
Certainly, as her teacher Dorothea
Krook wrote, there occurred "a

great, perhaps even a titanic, sing-
gle for 'normalcy' against the forces
of disintegration within her." But in
early October 1962, among the most
harrowing and frank of her late
poems came the five poems about
bees and beekeeping. Sister blits
and parallels abound in them; yet
there is a kind of exuberant fasci-
nation, an activity, which drew her
temporarily from personal distress,
dark joyousness in spinning out
elaborate metaphors that recalls
some much earlier poems:

The bees have got so far. Seventy feet
light
Russia, Poland and Germany!
The mild hills, the same old meadows
Fields drunk to a penny
Spun into a river, the river crossed.
The bees argued, in their black ball,
A flying hedgehog, all prickles.

And in "Wintering", the final one of
this five, "The bees are flying. They
taste the spring." The beekeeping
was to be her last thorough - even
happy - absorption in the world out-
side her own febrile, queuing in-
agination, and her own pain.

But she is more concerned with de-
Beauvoir's difficulties and fears in
personal relationships than with the
problems of compromising the indi-
vidual conscience in political action,
despite her declared preference for
The Mandarins, which deals in detail
with such problems. And she devotes
much attention to the unconscious
revelations and possible self-
deceptions of her subject. This per-
spective results in some of Ascher's
most fruitful perceptions, as in con-
nection with the fiction of the 1940s
(*She Came to Stay*, *The Blood of
Others*, *All Men are Mortal*) where
she notes how, although "in these
early novels de Beauvoir's characters
often pose their dilemmas in existen-
tialist language, rage, which is rarely
given philosophical legitimacy, and
which is often denied by the charac-
ters themselves, is actually a strong
motor driving the plot ahead".

Ascher is also particularly strong in
conveying the intricate, almost
Lamian way in which de Beauvoir
presents degrees of consciousness
and of "bad faith" as women asser-
or abdicate their independence in

sexual relationships, through analy-
sis of the situation of Elizabeth in
She Came to Stay, Paule in *The
Mandarins*, Laurence in *Les Belles
Images* and Murielle in *A Woman
Destroyed*.

Ascher's brand of feminism, with
its call to women to "reconnect to
the specificity of our bodies", to wel-
come psychotherapy (which de
Beauvoir still deeply distrusts) as a
means of exploring the unconscious,
and to investigate the world of the
irrational and of "spiritual truths",
makes such a focus inevitable and
leads to some predictable biases. Her
own theoretical preferences are
clear: she relegates de Beauvoir's in-
ter analysis of women's oppression
in terms of material conditions and
scarcity to the footnotes and lavishes
praise on her treatment of women in
myth in *The Second Sex*, "which is
brilliant, foreshadowing similar
analyses by such contemporary writ-
ers in the United States as Dinner-
stein, Ortner, Chodorow and
Griffin".

Although Ascher reasserts the
value of de Beauvoir's refusal to fall
back on social or psychological de-
terminism as a means of evading
responsibility, and exhorts her read-
ers to "preserve Simone de
Beauvoir's ruthless determination to
dig down and lay bare truth", this
lack of integration, which leads in de
Beauvoir to a tenuous rationalism,
is seen by Ascher as detrimental to
"bringing the whole self into free-
dom", which "would be reserved for
the next generation". In the event,
de Beauvoir still proves an uncom-
fortably isolated figure, difficult to
assimilate into any single trend of
radical thought. Ascher's attempt to
come to terms with her influence
results in a book which is sometimes
illuminating, often infuriating, but al-
ways appropriately provocative.

She is particularly critical of de
Beauvoir's profound unease with de
Beauvoir to a tenuous rationalism,
body, and it is true that de
Beauvoir's early refusal to accept
that her emotional needs and physi-
cal desires cannot be totally control-
led by the will weakens her self-
analysis and renders her incapable of
comprehending such impulses as
desire for children, or of seeing ful-
filment rather than the loss of auton-
omy in the expression of sexuality in
heterosexual, or homosexual rela-
tionships. This point is not new, nor

helplessly vomiting up his love for
the master-mistress of his passion,
strike home with demonic beauty. It
is all very un-English of course - not
least in the immense debt about The
Good that fills the spaces between the
luscious and exciting scenes. No
wonder Murdoch baffles us: it is as
though Holy Communion, in the
shape of a huge Black Forest gâteau
bursting with liqueur cream, were
offered by a priestess in a leopard-
skin body stocking.

Murdoch's sense of the Good, says
Elizabeth Dipple approvingly, is "an
external, infinitely far-removed,
transcendent ideal". This is hardly
surprising, since anything more
driven-to-earth would blow her crew
of saints to bits - as Daisy nearly
does in *Nuns and Soldiers*. What a
sat! Groggily with intellect, groaning
with virtue, and stealthily flinging
each other's moral wiles, as though
the Drones Club had gone Method-
ist. Admittedly some of the pleasure
in reading Murdoch comes from
seeing how her fingers itch to tweak
all those earnest perfectionists into
figures of force, so that the imperfect

reader is led to suspect that her
virtue has as much to do with sup-
pressed mischief as with active be-
nevolence.

Dipple's achievement is to whiten
this licentious genius into a sepulchre
of high and excellent seriousness.
She exhorts the common reader -
redefined as "the fairly well-educated
middle-class person who has been
reading novels for a long time" - to
"approach Murdoch's work seriously
in the light of study and rereading".
Work for the spirit! Indeed. The
novels which, however uneven, are
almost shrewdly readable, are con-
verted into mysterious repositories of
academic transcendentalism. "Mur-
doch's troupe of bourgeois Bohé-
mians are described as 'world-
immanent beings', and her recurrent
need to sink them in mud is seen as
redolent of the symbolically smother-
ing, death-dealing effect of the
reality-denying ego". Dipple's
book is very long, but I think what
she is saying essentially is that if you
ignore the people in her novels Mur-
doch is like Emerson. Or, as she
herself puts it, "ultimate reality,

even the cosmos itself, lies behind
the drifting and frenetic bourgeois
surface".

Perhaps this is an unfair simplifica-
tion - an example of the unjust and
too often frivolous negative criticism
that Dipple finds nife among Mur-
doch reviewers. Certainly her book
is an antidote to gibes. And be-
hind the self-protective jargon there
is a transparently sincere concern for
her author's reputation. The best
moments come when she forgets her
status and lets her jaw drop in
amazement at the seductive imagin-
ings she is professionally committed
to explaining, or when she displays
an innocence which Iris Murdoch
lacks. Hartley's bungalow in *The
Sea, The Sea*, she says charmingly,
"is called Nilbog, which is my Cana-
dian girlfriend envious me to connect
with black licorice candies". But
Jack Donaghy's words in *Under the
Net* were obviously prophetic: "I
came to be regarded as a solemn
highbrow with no powers of enter-
tainment". Or perhaps Canadians
take their pleasures even more sadly
than the English.

The I and the Other

By Jennifer Uglow

CAROLE ASCHER:
Simone de Beauvoir
A Life of Freedom
254pp. Brighton: Harvester, £9.95.
0 7018 0313 3

Carole Ascher described her book to
its subject, Simone de Beauvoir,
thus, "Not a biography, a philo-
sophical critique, or a work of liter-
ary criticism. I wanted it to be about
what you might have said to feminists
and other political people in the Uni-
ted States today." De Beauvoir's
categories of immanence and trans-
cendence, oppression and liberation,
or, in psychological terms, authenti-
cally and bad faith are therefore
constantly transferred to the issues of
conscience facing American liberals,
and, rather more successfully, to the
personal dilemmas of a "Jewish,
middle-class, intellectual woman".

As she surveys de Beauvoir's work
Ascher's particular interest is in the
tension between acceptance of the
solitary "I" and the fearful longing to
blend into the Other, to become
"We", which at its most intense she
describes as "that excruciating desire
to become God". She examines its
presence both in the explicit philo-
sophical statements and in the dyna-
mic emotional patterns of the fiction,
and explores its implications for po-
litical development, giving a clear
account, for instance, of the shift in
tone in the autobiography between

*Simone de Beauvoir: A Life of
Freedom* is an interesting
attempt to combine conventional ex-
pository criticism with a radical
feminist perspective. Although it
contains much diligent analysis, the
reader's first task is to modify ex-
pectations of an unemotional
"academic" approach and to jettison
any lingering prejudices against the
confessional mode. In the middle of
the text is a long letter from the
author to de Beauvoir, inspired by
Erik Erikson's explosion of personal
feeling in *Childhood's Truth*:

Is my anger - at you, at my
mother - the remaining dregs of a
once powerful and flowering Oedipal
complex? ... My novel is a
deformed child about whom I wor-
ry constantly, but for whom I can
do nothing. My de Beauvoir child
is a hyperactive, precocious child
who drains my thoughts and emo-
tions by her constant need for
attention.

By the time we reach the Afterword
the mother/daughter image has be-
come even more convoluted. "In the
dream I had had a very pleasant
affair with a woman and was now
pregnant, presumably soon to deliv-
er." The mind reels when Ascher
nuzzles on how little we know about
"how Boswell felt while writing about
Johnson".

Yet these images are an apt ex-
pression of the combination of
admiration and frustration, the need
to reject and move on, felt by many
feminists for "great" figures like de
Beauvoir or Margaret Mead. The
present study was in fact conceived
at one of the many conferences
which marked the thirtieth
anniversary of the publication of *The
Second Sex* (1949), and it captures
very well their mood of mingled gra-
titude and irritation - at that book's
apparent arrogance, its ambivalence
towards women, and the weaknesses
in its analyses of their condition. The
celebrations of 1979 were followed
by a ripple of articles and now a
series of forthcoming books. Fortu-
nately, one is protected from feeling
swamped by the copious, rich and
contradictory nature of de Beauvoir's
own works, which repay endless
attention and allow for a wide variety
of approaches. Furthermore, be-
cause she has retained her intellec-
tual rigour and her commitment to
radical politics and feminism, it is
impossible (or should be) to treat de
Beauvoir as an inert body laid out

The *Journal of Modern Literature* is
devoted to "scholarly studies of the
literature of the past century with
main emphasis on the 'Modernist'
period from about 1885 to 1950".
The current issue (volume 9, number
1, 1981/1982) contains three centen-
ary offerings: two articles on James
Joyce, "James Joyce and the Critics
Notwithstanding", by Edwin R. Stein-
berg and "Joyce and the Epiphany
Concept: A New Approach", by
Zack Bowen; and one on Virginia
Woolf, "Virginia Woolf and
Unfinished", by Alan McLaughlin. There
are also the Majesty of "Robert
Frost and the Majesty of 'Stones'
Upoo, Stones", by Arthur Symonds
("Arthur Symonds' Novel & 'Sym-
onds'")

Joseph Conrad, Roger Casement and
the Congo Reform Movement", by
Forster ("Leonard's Fatal Forgotten
Umbrella: Sex and the Manuscript
Revisions to *Heart of Darkness*"), and
Hemingway ("Hemingway and
Papa: Killing of the Father in the
Nick Adams Fiction"). The volumes
also provide a section, "For the
Record", which contains brief
accounts of recent literary discover-
ies or evaluations. These include
"Samuel Beckett's 'Pingal' and the
Irish Tradition", by each volume of *JML*
contains four issues. The subscrip-
tion is \$10 and it is available from [24]
Humanities Building, Temple Univer-
sity, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
19122.

JoAnn Cannon tells us in her
introduction (which also serves as
a concrete and clearly-defined
statement of intention), as a series of
analyses of individual books, a
modest project which then, however,
grows to include "more general
theoretical questions" such as "the
relationship between the writer and
society, the status of the author vis-
à-vis the fictional text, the nature of
language and literary discourse, the
role of the reader in the production
of reading". If this at first seems a
pretty tall order for such a slim
volume, it must be said immediately
that Ms Cannon not only acquits
herself admirably (and very lucidly),
but also consistently. My only cavil

might be with the opening chapter,
which, as Ms Cannon again freely
admits, was conceived as an after-
thought and gives what is ultimately
a rather perfunctory survey of
Calvin's early, neo-realist fiction.
This, however, is meant only as an
introduction to the study of Calvin's
more "theoretically fertile" works:
Chapter II deals with the *Autumnal*
trilogy; Chapter III with *Le Comin-
ciche* and *La Conquête*; Chapters
IV and V with (respectively) *Il Cas-
tello dei Destini Incrociati* and *La
Città Invisibile*; while Chapter VI
concentrates on Calvin's latest
novel, *Se una notte d'inverno un
viaggiatore*.

As Ms Cannon sees it, Calvin's
principal literary preoccupation is
with the inherent non-telefinality
of writing, and the problems of the
relationship between writer and text,
reader and text, and writer and read-
er. To elaborate such concerns she
draws to good effect on formalist
structuralist, post-structuralist and
phenomenological theory, but in
such a refreshingly eclectic way as to
allow her argument to develop freely,
supported, where necessary, by
apposite and accessible quotations.

Se una notte d'inverno un viaggiatore
may well represent
the definitive exegesis of Calvin's
often expressed need to write the
book of books, the meta-novel.
Where his fictions can go from here is
a question open to debate (since he
does seem to have painted himself
into a corner). It is not a question
Ms Cannon touches on. What she
does do, however, is present us with
in concise, well-documented and val-
uable account (complete with exten-
sive bibliography) of the story so far.

Penn's people

By John Hollander

DANIEL HOFFMAN:
Brotherly Love
176pp. Random House, £5.95.
0 394 74726 7
0 394 74726 7

Brought into being through William
Penn's treaty with the Delaware In-
dians of 1682, Philadelphia has no
powerful mythology surrounding its
origins. Conceived in a benignly
abstract moral realm, and with an intel-
lectual émigré climate that favoured
the precision of the sciences, the city
developed a central poetic tradi-
tion. In *Brotherly Love*, Daniel
Hoffman, an émigré New Yorker,
treats Philadelphia's foundation in
terms of Penn, his treaty, and the
consequences of its broken covenant.
Since his impressive volume in the
Yale Younger Poets series, Hoffman
has published five books of verse
and several distinguished critical
works. *Brotherly Love*, besides being
his longest is also his best poem. Its
power derives in part from the inner
conflict between poet and scholar.
The historical materials which form
the web of the poem's sixty-one sec-
tions, through which the parables,
ellipses, confrontations and recon-
structions of poetic design are
woven, come not from a belletristic
historian, but from a historical poet.

After a proem to the present city
and its poetic ghosts (Brookden
Brown, Poe, Whitman, always at the
peripheries of Philadelphia myth),
Hoffman begins with the "Lami-
denape Indians (themselves), their
theogony and genesis, and the picto-
graph in which such texts lay en-
coding. At a crucial moment, a pres-
cient notion is introduced into his
given, what is given is all that is
given, what is coming afterward, have
no choice in the matter." But poets,
coming afterward, course do, the
traces of the historical, arranging his
narrative, from historical "docu-
ments or compilations on pictures

pastiche of older literary forms, etc)
replaces the poet's own voice in all
and postlude.

Philadelphia's *genius loci* in Hoff-
man's poem inhabits both the Indi-
ans and William Penn himself. There
is some subtly allusive irony in the
way in which Penn's actual language
is introduced (it occupies more than
five-verse modes), its prose at this
point falling into the so-called "ver-
table foot" of Hoffman's precursor,
William Carlos Williams - a mea-
sure that proclaims an independent plo-
ness and freedom from metre and
thereby, its essentially American
quality. Hoffman seems to imply that
for Williams such a measure would
itself be a figure for the self-
begotting quality of a possible Ameri-
can nobility. But Penn speaking
here, as elsewhere - is no mere
historic mask for the poet; rather it
seems to work the other way around.

The sections of the poem embrace
a wide range of forms. Including
several instances of seventeenth-
century generic and prosodic pas-
tiche. But the historical ventrilo-
quism allows Hoffman to propound the
measured historical theme. With a
no tonal underlining Hoffman de-
scribes Penn's father's great naval
victory. In the somewhat creaking
couplets of an anonymous poet of
the later seventeenth century; simi-
larly, the younger Penn's own brief
military career is treated in the style
of Andrew Marvell's "Horatian
Ode".

Hoffman's formal ingenuity is a far
cry from Williams' rather purist
formalism. Just as the narrative pro-
gression through its sections is a very
different version of modernist discor-
dancy. The "narrativity" of *Brotherly
Love*, and its engagement with an
image-making irony and formal com-
plexity help frame the auditory and
its claim that the past can speak for
itself. Only poetry can speak for it.
For two centuries it looks as if all
America had was its future: now it
seems more and more that all it may
have had was its promising past.

Michael Hamburger's latest book is
something of a puzzle. It contains
two long poems, or "sequences" as
the blurbs call them, named
"Travelling" and "In Suffolk" respec-
tively. Both are written in language
at once literal, pedestrian, and highly
abstract. "Travelling" appears to be
about large matters such as time,
place and love:

Thirty years back. Three hundred.
It's the same earth.
With beer-cups, oporesses, lying
tines away from arrowheads,
Flint, and local barley covered.
The sameness confused. If now
A rabbit screamed I'd be elsewhere.
By Thames or Windrush or Tav,
Moving as I now move
through one death to the next.

Throughout the book one is left
groping for substance and direction.
There are elegiac passages about his
poet's father, for example, but so
glancingly set down that we are de-
nied entrance to all but the most
generalized of sentiments. Similarly
some elements of a love affair are
sketched in, but with an obliqueness
that keeps us light years away from
any real knowledge of, and hence
engagement with, the protagonists:

Washed up, amber
From the distant Baltic, bones,
Onions from somebody's garden,
Bottles from half the globe,
Bits of plastic contraptions
And oil, of course, oil
Stuck to seaweed, sea shells,
Drowned gulliecot, cod
Cadaver: news of the world

Elizabeth Smithers:
The Legend of Marcello Mastrolanni's
Wife

64pp. Oxford University Press/Auck-
land University Press, £5.50.
0 19647 992 4

Some of these short poems have a
pleasingly caustic quality. One of
several inspired by the tale of the
Princess and the Pea; for example,
if the bump she feels through the
or without it, pea or a plump.
This rather vulgar humour is com-
pelling and unusual: it is certainly
rare in English poetry. (Elizabeth
Smithers is a New Zealand poet, though
the more sophisticated and man-
nered irony of a Grigson or an En-
right has something in common with
it.)

Another attractive feature of the
collection is its arrangement: rather
than string together all those poems
on the same theme (St. Theresa's
bride / But not being able to see / I
had left my handbag mirror on the
floor". The reader is left wondering
if Smithers really means this, and
so what the significance of it can be,
or if she really meant to say that the
Princess was unable to see, having
left her handbag mirror on the floor.
"On International Street" contains
this bowdler: "The little some per-
son's cottage" - to offset images as
effective, if sentimental, as e.g., e.
cumings-love up, as this: "And the
sky / If you look up is like the soft
under-belly / of a big fat fed-full of
fuel / and borrowings and drunks hop-
ing for a happy landing".

Grace Darling, etc) to a conventional
sequence, the poet has spread them
about. The effect of each recurrence
is to build up a sense of obsession,
and the poems, slight in themselves,
seem to gain in depth and bright-
ness.

It must be said, however, that
many of these pieces have an air of
portentousness justified neither by
their subject-matter nor their tech-
nique. The title of the collection natu-
rally arouses curiosity, but the poem
in which it is taken, set blithely on
generalized to bear the weight thrust
seeming earth-mother who waits for
male, and who, when he falls to
show up, "reclines her litany into a
darkness". This is not an unfamiliar
activity for a literary heroine, and
unless the writer really has some-
thing new to say.

More annoying are the grammati-
cal imprecisions scattered throughout
the volume. "The Princess Prepares
her Report", for instance, a perfectly
straightforward narrative of a dream,
ends with the line: "Towards dawn I
felt / The definite beginnings of a

bruise / But not being able to see / I
had left my handbag mirror on the
floor". The reader is left wondering
if Smithers really means this, and
so what the significance of it can be,
or if she really meant to say that the
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ing for a happy landing".

Because the poet has something to
say, and at times says it interestingly
and well, it is all the more regret-
table that she allows herself such slip-
shod constructions as "these sort of
poems" and "from all sides from
scouts". If this were a first collection
by a young writer freshly discovered
by some antipodean creative-writing
course, one could justifiably talk ab-
out "promise", but this seems to be
Elizabeth Smithers's fourth book. She
ought by now to have polished her
grammar into a fit instrument for her
talent.

The puzzle is why a writer as
obviously intelligent as Michael
Hamburger has chosen to paste his
poem in what amounts to pastiche.
(Other echoes inhabit this garden
too, notably of Wordsworth and
Hardy.) In his critical book *The Truth
of Poetry*, Hamburger is severe on
Eliot's famous doctrine of "imperi-
nality", and quotes, Gottfried Benn
approvingly: "lyrical poetry has no
other theme than the poet himself".
No doubt, but a voice of one's own
is evidently no birthright.

Raging against nature

By Stephen Newman

ELIZABETH DIPPLE:
Iris Murdoch
Work for the Spirit
356pp. Methuen, £12.50.
0 416 31290 X

With her lurid imagination, her fien-
dashy clever plots, and her toxic
eroticism, Iris Murdoch offers an
arresting challenge to the sober
values of post-war English literature
and criticism. "Art", says the editor
of *The Black Prince*, to the priggish
critical Julian Bellings, "art is a very
much tougher end coarser plant than
you seem to imagine in your very
literary piece". The snarl is distanced
by a rhetorical trick, but Murdoch
can no more disguise herself. In her
writing than that other priest of love,
D. H. Lawrence; some primitive
vigour comes blazing through. Her
careless, tumultuous prose is laid on
like paint - not make-up but war-
paint.

Where she differs from Lawrence
is that he expresses the rage of na-
ture against art, while she expresses
the rage of art against nature. Mur-
doch's art is rich, in all senses of the
word. "A trembling silver cage of an
almost obscene sweetness, a sort of
plump, luscious heart-piercing cas-
cade of sugary agony", that is how
Bradley Pearson describes *Der
Rosenskavaler* in the central scene of
The Black Prince; and Murdoch
shares Strauss's brutal relish for ex-
pensive pleasures. That scene, with
Bradley slumped among the carrots
and strawberries of Covent Garden,

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and strawberries of Covent Garden,

The self-referring text

By David S. Watson

JOANN CANNON:
Italo Calvino
Writer and Critic
117pp. Ravenna: Longo, £8.00.

Italo Calvino: Writer and Critic
begins, as JoAnn Cannon tells us in
her introduction (which also serves
as a concrete and clearly-defined
statement of intention), as a series of
analyses of individual books, a
modest project which then, however,
grows to include "more general
theoretical questions" such as "the
relationship between the writer and
society, the status of the author vis-
à-vis the fictional text, the nature of
language and literary discourse, the
role of the reader in the production
of reading". If this at first seems a
pretty tall order for such a slim
volume, it must be said immediately
that Ms Cannon not only acquits
herself admirably (and very lucidly),
but also consistently. My only cavil

might be with the opening chapter,
which, as Ms Cannon again freely
admits, was conceived as an after-
thought and gives what is ultimately
a rather perfunctory survey of
Calvin's early, neo-realist fiction.
This, however, is meant only as an
introduction to the study of Calvin's
more "theoretically fertile" works:
Chapter II deals with the *Autumnal*
trilogy; Chapter III with *Le Comin-
ciche* and *La Conquête*; Chapters
IV and V with (respectively) *Il Cas-
tello dei Destini Incrociati* and *La*

The pictorial and the poetic

By Brian Reade

ESTELLE JUSSIM:

Slave to Beauty: The Eccentric Life and Controversial Career of F. Holland Day
399pp. Bantam; David R. Godine.
Distributed by Travelling Light, 62
West Hill, London SW18, £17.50.
0 87223 346 X

To anyone interested in the 1890s, Copeland and Day will be remembered together. Such were the names of two partners in Boston who published most of the earlier Bodley Head output. The more versatile of the two was Fred Holland Day. It was he who founded the firm as a young man in 1893 and thereby introduced the upper reading public of America to the values of William Morris, for example; but also to the ideas of English writers and artists of the *fin de siècle*. In addition he published American authors who provided foreign readers with the educational and social assumptions of those who professed them. The results showed a warmth of affection, unknown elsewhere. One of the strictures in Theodore Dreiser's *Twelve Men* tells of young hohmanns in New York at the turn of the century, who for a time hastened to imitate the European literary stars of the moment before some turn of events snatched them to other ways of becoming. In neither of these stories, "Vanity," Dreiser's heading, in the novel itself mirrors an archetype of the Great Gatsby, whose rise to riches and ruin, and his later collapse, seem linked to a greed so close to innocence, it is slightly mysterious to anyone brought up in England. And that mysterious innocent air lingers still about Fred Holland Day in his literary role. Some of the home-grown authors he put into print were, like himself, hobbyists, whose aestheticism had a strain of recklessness we now perceive as made in America.

What can be found in the derivative publications of Copeland and Day, however, can be found also in the works of several of their authors, who by contrast were unashamedly American and much less indebted to Europe. *Songs From Vagabondia* by Bliss Carman and Richard Hovey was published by them in 1894, with covers and endpapers by Tom Meteyard; to be followed two years later by *More Songs From Vagabondia* by the same authors. These poems became a cult in East Coast university circles, and with reason, for in them something masculine and gypsified in the manner of Stevenson's "Roadside Fire" had found expression by exuberantly breaking certain habits of good taste. Introducing for example in the second volume the word "orgasm" to the general reader who in England had to wait until after the First World War for such a treat. Then in 1895 the firm published Stephen Crane's first collection of poems, *The Black Riders*, with a bold and beautiful art nouveau cover by Fred Gordon. The way was being paved for Hart Crane and William Carlos Williams and a whole series of later poets, whose American mutations, aligned again with Poe and Whitman, were helped along by Day's pioneering spirit. In the 1890s, in 1892 Copeland and Day closed, and their remaining stock was sold to Small, Maynard and Company, an Irish-lacking equivalent opportunity for risk and influence. Professor Estelle Jussim in her monograph *Slave to Beauty* furnishes a niche for Day in literary history. She accords him the kind of justice he never received in his lifetime because, in the first place he gave up publishing too quickly; and he gave up publishing because around 1895 he took up photography as an art.

Although he wrote and published a single essay in the Decadent movement, Day was never obliged to limit himself to the commitments of a professional writer. He was the son of a New York State Senator but his family's influence emanated from

Boston: there he proved to be an innuendo force among susceptible acquaintances and could dedicate himself in various ways to aesthetic trends and ambitions without drudgery. It was scarcely odd therefore that more refinement brought him and Bernard Berenson together, or that he and the poet Louise Imogen Guiney should have been unconsummated lovers, with Louise in a maternal role as heterosexual ally; or that the two of them should journey to Europe in 1889 and 1890 (Louise being loosely chaperoned) to undertake research on Keats, and again in 1894 to take part in the founding of the Keats Memorial at Hampstead.

Day was much interested in Balzac, until both of them were interested in Keats. But in the course of 1890-91 Day went to Spain by himself and acquired a collection of Fanny Bravée's letters from her daughter, who had married a Spanish lord in Madrid. These letters were taken back by Day to the United States - on loan or as a gift was never clear - and kept unpublished. Presumably he had intended publication in due course and may have been inhibited by the copyright that survived with Fanny Bravée's son. What is hard to understand is that never in all the forty-three years remaining to him did he let Louise Imogen Guiney have a look at the letters, although her interest in Keats was as great as his own. Estelle Jussim faces up to this dog-in-the-manger prudishness, so uncharacteristic of Day, without trying to justify it.

Slave to Beauty contains the first full-length account of Day. Apart from her personal research, Jussim was indebted to a few manuscript sources, and to fifteen articles from journals specializing in photography. About one third of the work is devoted to his publishing activities and is well illustrated with reproductions of some of the covers and title-pages that enlivened his books. For his gift was visual more than verbal, and as far back as 1886 he began to experiment in making photographs, exhibiting some of the results at the Boston Camera Club.

Day's visits to Europe had been partly taken up with a conscientious study of art, mainly painting. He gained a real understanding of what lay behind the craftsmanship of Velázquez, Murillo, Van Dyck, Rembrandt, and then later of nineteenth-century masters like Gérardin, Manet and Whistler. The outcome was an advance in photography from the linear conventions of his time to some of the most tactful and ingenious representations of tone values in graphic design. In this respect photography offered greater possibilities than anything done completely by hand, though it took an artist, as we call it, to see this. Day was among the earliest to gain advantage from the fact. It was never a case of letting reality or nature do the work. Many hours of camera-angling and arrangement were devoted to his negatives, and with practical logic he often let good commercial hands develop the prints. In the 1890s he was able to exploit the availability of the new platinum paper. Estelle Jussim writes of this support for printing negatives:

Its subdued range of tones, its absolute permanence, and its velvet texture resembled many mezzotints. Like gum bichromide, this paper guaranteed a graphic quality equal to mezzotint, equating and elegiac.

And it was the prohibitive rise in the cost of platinum during the First World War that finally discouraged Day from any more photographic work.

His subjects were all human and mainly single. He was not concerned with landscape alone, or with crowded or action. There was a distinct preoccupation with young males, among others his black servant and an Oriental youth whom he helped to educate. But his studies of women of all ages were equally good, some rivaling the most light-effective

achievements of today, and a few reaching over in style to paintings by Bonnard and Vuillard in their off-centre design and abridgement of linear definition.

Dovetailing into Day's enterprise as a photographer came another pursuit, which began in the 1880s at Boston and accelerated after he met W. B. Yeats in London during 1890. This was his curiosity about paranormal psychology and the occult, which with the help of Yeats led him to an acquaintance with Rosicrucianism and Theosophy. Madame Blavatsky and ectoplasm he rejected; what remained was belief in ritual suffering as a redemptive experience, and an obsession with symbolic imagery which found in his case a better medium of expression in photography than in literature.

Scandal followed in 1898, thus adding notoriety to budding fame. Baroque art, the Yeats influence and a memory of Oberhammer prompted him to attempt a photo-picture of Christ on the Cross, and for this he himself posed as the chief model. He went to enormous bother over it all, dictating so that he could hang lightly on the Cross on a hill near Norwood, and arranging for numerous extras and for distant purchases of authentic material props. Two hundred and fifty negatives were made of the scene. Of course the very idea of extending seventeenth-century Christian iconography (acceptable in the works of Velázquez and Van Dyck) to the chemical mysteries of the photo-lab was too much for the dilapidated establishment. Professor Jussim gives an amusing account of this and of other Christen photographs by Day, which she sees as bad art and worse photography. In looking at a photograph, she quotes a contemporary critic as saying, "you cannot forget that it is a representation of something that existed when it was taken." On the other hand theoretical prohibitions about art and the externalization of feeling can surely be counted retardative. For wide approval, timing is essential. Looking back at "Christ on the Cross" today, it appears both bad and enduring. Its perpetrator had to suffer uncharitable comments, both personal and professional, in America and in Europe. But he rose above them and continued up to the First World War to experiment with allegorical, mythological and symbolic concepts, visualized photographically. The young nude models appearing in these contributed to the doubt and the disapproval. Not that he cared, it seems.

His admiration for Oscar Wilde was based at first on the published works; later in London on the personal magnetism. As a Decadent publisher he was bound to come across Beardsley's illustrations, and those for *Salomé* (1894) he published in Boston along with *The Yellow Book* as part of his arrangement with the Bodley Head. When he was in London in 1894 he met Beardsley in the company of Frederick Evans, an English master of the platinotype who remained an appreciative friend. Evans indeed had introduced Beardsley to J. M. Dent, his first publisher, in 1892.

Jussim devotes a lot of her book to the influence of Wilde and Beardsley on Day. Clearly Wilde counted for much in his thinking and way of living. After his death, it appears, some letters to him from Wilde were sold at auction in Boston, but have disappeared since; and there is a view, shared by Estelle Jussim, that these letters had an importance for Day in helping to bring him "out of the closet". In addition there were letters from Beardsley, not heard of again after their sale beside the letters from Wilde. These two are given some credit for pushing Day towards overt homosexuality. All this is interesting enough, though difficult to confirm or confirm until the letters surface again. What is not quite convincing is the emphasis placed on Day's links with Wilde and Beardsley, as though they had written often and each had forged a close friendship with him.

The fact that there is no mention of Day in the Hart-Davis editions of Wilde's correspondence (he refers once to the firm of Copeland and Day), or in the Maas and Good publication of Beardsley's letters, suggests that perhaps the disciple of Norwood cherished a few acknowledgments from his two champions, and these being lost, Professor Jussim has made the best of them. She also writes of a "priceless collection of original Beardsley drawings", later called an "invaluable collection", that was burnt up in a fire at the Harcourt Building in Boston which housed Day's studio. It is possible, indeed likely, that he acquired some original drawings but if so, they are not accounted for in the Beardsley canon; they have not been identified; and if they were destroyed in the fire of 1904, and if, as we are told, they were considered priceless or invaluable, Day would surely have had records of them. Professor Jussim relies perhaps too easily on such evidence as Day's letter to J. M. Dent of June 21, 1893, thanking him for a copy of one of the *Bois Morts* series illustrated by Beardsley. It is not entirely clear, however, whether when Day wrote of drawings he always meant original drawings, or the line-blocks as published.

Reservations about the importance of his collection of Beardsley drawings are deepened by Jussim's uncertainty, or at least lack of essential precision, when she refers to Beardsley as having "used the newly perfected photographic technology of the line engraving". What Beardsley used for most of his illustrations was the zincograph, or the line block, or process engraving (a misleading term). Line blocks had the character of letterpress and could be fixed with moveable type to print in one colour. The term "line engraving" has always been restricted to an intaglio process involving the use of a graver or burin on copper. There is uncertainty too about courtesy titles. It is correct to call "Bosha" Lord Alfred Douglas, as Jussim mostly does; but it is a classic howler to call him Lord Douglas.

Estelle Jussim's chapters on Day's indebtedness to Wilde and Beardsley are her most interesting passages, together with those describing his work as a photographer. The subject has wide appeal. Even so, revision may be needed if it is to be rightly focused. For instance, she dwells upon Beardsley's iconographic influence on Day's art; Day was undoubtedly fascinated, as she shows, by the cult of Pan and Paganism in the Englishman's earlier works. It contributed to a bottleneck, so to speak, of hedonism, through which he had to pass in order to qualify for the ritual suffering he had borrowed from Yeats. How Beardsley's present irony was rationalized for him it would be difficult to say, given the absence of that quality in all the photographs chosen for reproduction in the book. Jussim even suggests that he was directly indebted to the Herm compositions in the *Morte D'Arthur* and *Salomé*, although this is not borne out by the fifty-nine plates and 214 figures in the text. Day's "Boy Embracing the Herm of Pan" for example, of c. 1905, owes little to Beardsley and

revealing an early manifestation of the friendship which later embraced Keats. His assiduous epistolary cultivation of a prosperous patron was more than a whiff of money about it, and Doveston seems to have brought the correspondence to an end when he found he was being spied upon by Wordsworth was soon to write to Reynolds that "your fancy is too luxuriant and floats too much upon its own creations", sending some of Reynolds's negligible works sent to Grasmere, for approval. Some early letters to have had some early in the tradition of literary failure (though it was increased drinking rather than diminished aspiration that was to be his downfall): "what a misery it is to be born a fool", wrote Doveston. "to be born a fool with just wisdom enough to know that you are one."

High but unfulfilled claims are made for Reynolds's own letters as revealing an early manifestation of the friendship which later embraced Keats. His assiduous epistolary cultivation of a prosperous patron was more than a whiff of money about it, and Doveston seems to have brought the correspondence to an end when he found he was being spied upon by Wordsworth was soon to write to Reynolds that "your fancy is too luxuriant and floats too much upon its own creations", sending some of Reynolds's negligible works sent to Grasmere, for approval. Some early letters to have had some early in the tradition of literary failure (though it was increased drinking rather than diminished aspiration that was to be his downfall): "what a misery it is to be born a fool", wrote Doveston. "to be born a fool with just wisdom enough to know that you are one."

possibly everything apart from the sex of the embezzler to Felicia Rops's aquatint "Vieux Faune", a Bertrand was entitled "Homage to Pan" in 1900. It seems more likely that it was the phallic elements in some of Beardsley's illustrations, so blood-curdling when they first appeared, that excited Day and gave him the courage to photograph youths completely nude. When it came to the Pan iconography however it was more probable that he was thinking of images by Moreau, or Knopf, or Rops than of compositions by Beardsley.

Having hailed Fred Holland Day as the most triumphant of American photographers working from 1895 to 1905, and as one of the first transatlantic members of the Brotherhood of the Linked Ring, acclaimed as the leader of the Pictorialist movement in photography, Professor Jussim uncovers one of the reasons for his sudden lapse into obscurity. The fire of 1904 in his Boston studio destroyed thousands of his glass negatives, apart from books and pictures, and that was clearly an appalling setback. Yet more of a setback, as she explains, was the character of his rival Alfred Stieglitz, a realist photographer who began as an admirer of Day and then broke away from the older man and his followers, minimizing his achievements, and partly through his journal *Camera Work* (1903-1917) plugging the excellence of his own, so that he himself is remembered and Day, until recently, almost forgotten.

In Day's imagination stimuli came from the Pictorialist, inspired by the Poetic. Like Wilde, he was in thrall to his favourite Keats. "The idea that poetry (and literature)", writes Estelle Jussim, "rather than painting alone might be a major influence on a major art has not been sufficiently explored in its relation to the development of photography."

Although some of Day's boldest and most carefully printed photographs dated from after 1905, he suffered a slowing-down in his health and energy. Before he finally retired to his bed like Proust, he was to be found in one or other of his New England retreats, a bearded masochist, signalling in terms of white sailor suits that he longed to be hugged by young men, while extending to women an obverse gift of empathy. Surely, we exclaim to ourselves, Louise Guiney must have known what she was doing when she helped him to find adolescent males to patronize? But no. Such amnesia belongs to a later date. We are not obliged to reduce her to equivocations to downward plots. True, the letters from Wilde and Beardsley, after his death were supposed to reveal that Day was, after all, a fully-fledged homosexual - as his publishing partner Copeland turned out to be. Yet the view that he was for most of the time repressed is more consonant with his physical and temperamental cast; and renunciation may have helped to displace his emotional problems into aggravation of his terminal illness. - not surprisingly, cancer of the prostate gland. He died in 1933 at the age of sixty-nine.

John Hamilton Reynolds was a minor poetaster now known only as a friend of Keats; John F. M. Doveston a Shropshire naturalist and provincial literary man known as a friend of Thomas Bewick. *Letters from Lambeth* (edited by Joanna Richardson, 212pp. Boydell Press, £12.00/\$135.150.7), sixty-four letters from Reynolds and his family written to Doveston, before either had made the friendship for which he is remembered, were not likely to flutter the dovecotes of early nineteenth-century literary scholarship. Published at length, with the full panoply of *litterata* transcription and some inconveniently placed annotations, they are a disappointment, graced by the authority of the Royal Society of Literature, which is joint publisher of the volume; they are a mischievous imposition.

High but unfulfilled claims are made for Reynolds's own letters as

FICTION

Song of her/himself

By Jennifer Moody

MACDONALD HARRIS:

Henna
431pp. Gollancz, £8.95.
0 575 03072 0

MacDonald Harris is a prolific writer. Since 1974 he has written six novels, all in their different ways distinguished and imaginative. Each of his last five books takes a different country for its setting, and each shows an intimate appreciation of local customs, culture and history. Harris is clearly fascinated by the structure and psychology of languages. He moves easily between English and, say, Japanese or Swedish, dwelling lightly on the inadequacies of translation without either slowing the action or browbeating the reader with his erudition.

He shows a similar delicacy of touch and intimacy of understanding with his heroines. At the outset emphasizing their epicene bodies and equine faces, he gradually unveils their subtlety of perception and firmness of purpose. All ere to some extent impatient of contemporary concepts of femininity; all tend to transgress and one wears a man's tattoo. All can, by their single-mindedness, offend those nearest to them. Though always taken for men when dressed *en travesti*, their femaleness is sensed by the men who, often to their own surprise, subsequently fall in love with them.

After the deluge

By David Montrose

HUGH FLEETWOOD:

A Young Fair God
160pp. Hamish Hamilton, £7.95.
0 241 10715 6

No one acquainted with Hugh Fleetwood's fiction will be surprised to learn that the pivotal event of his latest novel is a murder: violent death has always been an integral part of his repertoire. No surprises, either, in the gruesome nature of the crime: over since a hit-and-run provided the first corpse of Fleetwood's career. In his debut *A Painter of Flowers* (1972) - his dispatch work has grown progressively more elaborate -

The latest outbreak of bloodshed takes place at a hotel in the Mexican jungle, where a handful of guests have been isolated by rains. The hotel manager's wife is killed; her heart is cut out and placed on a toilet statue designed to receive sacrificial gifts. Subsequently, a woman guest is beheaded. The police cannot reach the hotel; a young guest investigates. In short, we have the components of a Golden Age murder mystery.

Fortunately, this is a false alarm. Fleetwood is well aware that he is approaching cliché - even his characters comment on it - and eschews the associations with the classical whodunnit are merely tangential.

There are two ways of reanimating literary conventions: either send up the genre or adapt the clichés to new tricks. Fleetwood has opted for the latter, more ambitious path. His main instrument in this is Peter Asbrand, the seventeen-year-old centre of consciousness through whom the third-person narration is filtered. Asbrand is an extremely unconventional slouch - hardly a sleuth at all in the traditional sense: his desire to protect the murderer from, rather than deliver him to, the machinery of justice.

Asbrand acts in accordance with what appears to be a highly dubious interpretation of events. A young man of exceptional physical and intellectual attributes, Asbrand believes himself to embody the spirit of a New Europe, that will, like the cultural superiority inherent in global

Movie, too, and especially vocal music, is never far away in Harris's work. Names, seemingly chosen at random but deriving, though subtly transmuted, from opera or lied, float through his novels like half-remembered tunes: Zuleika, Duplexis, Lohengrin, Earl Koenig, Luisa.

Harris's latest novel, *Henna*, purports to be the life story of an operatic soprano. Born in Southern California during what must be the first half of the 1890s, Henna, even as a small child, shows signs of a singing talent. Her parents, bewildered by her gifts, arrange some training for her voice but fail to understand or cope with her wilful, boyish spirit. Watching the boy next door as he is playing, she is captivated by the idea of the fun she could have if she had penis; when she reaches adolescence she concentrates hard and produces one. With a little effort this requisite can be protruded and retracted at will, and thereafter the novel becomes the story of two people - Henna as herself, a soprano with a three-octave range and a gift for mimicry, and Henna as her male alter ego, Fred Hite, a pushy, aggressively self-confident young man. Fred's occupation is managing Henna's professional career, and his preoccupation, when he is not bedecked aging actresses, is flying the earliest tin-foil-and-plywood aeroplanes.

Henna's voice takes them both to San Francisco where, while singing to Caruso, they all narrowly escape death in the great earthquake of 1906 and the three-day fire that followed.

domination; he is "a young fair god who will rule the world..." Asbrand stands for civilization and strength; his symbol is the hotel, a successful invasion and organization of the primitive wilderness. The hotel manager's wife, he senses, opposes his vision: "She... had cast her lot with the small, and the weak and the serving. She... refused to worship the young gods who were to rule the chaotic jungle. When the woman is murdered, Asbrand is convinced that one of the hotel's occupants, discerning his divinity, has offered up the enemy as a sacrifice. The murderer is, then, his first disciple, "an angel" who must be saved. Asbrand soon discovers another enemy; she becomes the angel's second victim.

All this is rather far-fetched, and the initial temptation is to conclude that Fleetwood is employing a variant of the unreliable narrator, that Asbrand's *Weltschmerz* has imposed a false pattern on coincidental occurrences. In Fleetwood's books, though, imagination can be a powerful weapon; the central character of *An Artist and a Magician*, for instance, found that he could wish people to death. And there are indications that Asbrand's unlikely version of events may contain some truth. Fleetwood has never worried about leaving loose ends; what passes for a denouement does little to make things clearer.

A Young Fair God is - characteristically for Fleetwood - a short novel. Uncharacteristically, it seems, despite its brevity, padded and over-written. The character of Asbrand is the principal failure, and such is the narrative burden placed on his shoulders that the novel buckles with him. Fleetwood agrees to much time in Asbrand's head, and his long-winded meditations fail to convince the reader that there is anything profound about them.

Fleetwood has always been a competent if limited writer whose novels, while relying on a small fund of themes and effects, are nevertheless worthy of consideration as more than straightforward thrillers. *A Young Fair God* is a more ambitious work, asking to be regarded as a great deal more than a straightforward thriller: the account of an epic conflict between, in Asbrand's terms, "the past and the future... barbarism and progress... the old and the new." It is too light-weight a work to bear such a heavy burden.

Asbrand acts in accordance with what appears to be a highly dubious interpretation of events. A young man of exceptional physical and intellectual attributes, Asbrand believes himself to embody the spirit of a New Europe, that will, like the cultural superiority inherent in global

lived it. By now well launched in the world of opera, Henna (and Fred) are summoned to Paris. Henna meets Puccini, who is inspired to write *The Girl of the Golden West* for her. She sings the title role at the world premiere (in fact created by Emmy Destinn) and is the first singer to play all four roles in Offenbach's *Tales of Hoffmann* (actually done by Adèle Isaac at its world premiere in 1881). She meets and becomes the friend of Proust, Pauré, Reynaldo Hahn, Chaliapin; as with Melba, her favourite dessert becomes the rage of fashionable Paris. Fred meanwhile continues to set his cap at mature actresses and the wives of successful politicians. No-one but Marcel Proust notices that Fred and Henna look alike and are never seen together, but he kindly agrees to keep their secret.

Time moves on, and the First World War breaks out. Henna's aristocratic French lover (both Henna and Fred are accomplished and successful lovers) is killed, food grows scarce and Zeppelins appear over Paris. Sobered by the fighting, Henna joins the troops and Fred joins the Eschtrille Aerobics, a volunteer force of almen. He (and, of necessity, she) is last seen launching an attack on German fighter aircraft in a way which is understood to be suicidal.

With *Henna* Harris has returned to, and developed, the theme of his novel *The Bullfighter* (1976). Luisa, assistant bullfighter, is an unpredictable, unsuccessful singer who dresses up as a man and calls herself Theodor. Luisa has now become Henna, successful opera star, and Fred, accomplished and daring aviator. Success is common to them both. As lovers, as singers, as aviators, as managers, whatever they do, they do well. But success has spoiled them both as well, it has made them arrogant. They make love well, but they do not love their partners. Henna sings well, but she does not love her opera. They are simply not vulnerable. All the background detail, authentic and thoroughly researched as it is, cannot conceal the fact that at the centre there is nothing. Fred and Henna have a lot of fun, and so does the reader; they meet interesting people, and so does the reader; but they never suffer, and the reader remains an onlooker, a voyeur.

The ethos of the trail

By Lindsay Duguid

GWEN MOFFAT:

The Buckskin Girl
191pp. Gollancz, £6.95.
0 575 03049 6

A heroine on horseback poses problems in a historical novel. Riding sideways is awkward for a girl who wants to take part in the action but riding astride is anachronistic. Helen Weir, the heroine of *The Buckskin Girl*, has a buckskin suit made for her early on in the book and discards her dresses and more romantic side-saddle. It is a wise decision, for she has to do a lot of hard riding as she travels with and eventually leads a small wagon train from Missouri to the promised land of California.

The novel describes the long journey, in covered wagons, on horseback, and sometimes on foot, made by a group of emigrants in the mid-nineteenth century. It concentrates on the painfully slow progress of the travellers, and on the hazards they face as they cross deserts and mountains, manoeuvring the clumsy wagons and food cattle down gulches and across fords. California ceases to be discussed once the realities of the journey take over, and the individual members of the team are concerned with their fellows only in so far as they threaten to support the group. Theft, murder and madness are problems to be overcome, just as Indian raids and lack of water are. "It's made people mean," Helen

Mole underwater

By Michael Trend

DUFF HART-DAVIS:

Level Five
288pp. Cape, £6.95.
0 224 01828 0

Take an archaeological mystery, a racy plot, international conspiracy, love and war and the resulting mix is Jonathan Cape's recipe for success in 1982. First there was *The Holy Blood and the Holy Grail* and now Duff Hart-Davis's *Level Five*. The latter is the better work of fiction.

Hart-Davis's is a stirring tale. It is the spring of 1945; Oberleutnant Joachim Krenn is in charge of Convoy 4711 (sic), which is fleeing Berlin, with a secret cargo, on the personal orders of Reichsmarschall Gering. It is also the present day and Martin Newman, a tough North Sea diver, has been hired to live into a flooded salt-mine to look for unspecified objects. The two stories - the earlier only a brief account - are interwoven.

It is apparent from an early stage that the aim of Martin Newman's search is to recover the secret consignments of Oberleutnant Krenn. The action moves fast: the mine entrance is attacked while Newman is diving and his supply lines are cut; he manages to reach the surface; he wakes up in an East German hospital; he escapes. On the run, he falls in - quite by chance - with an East German dissident, and during a visit to East Berlin he decides, by a process of logic that is never entirely clear to the reader, that the object of his diving has been the Schliemann treasure from the excavations at Troy. Newman escapes to the West, falls for a pretty girl, contacts his friend Don (whose language can only be described as "esoteric"), travels to the United States, returns to Europe, locates the mine, and we enter the final scene with our hero somewhat breathless but in fighting form.

Newman is by no means an unattractive man, but is often unaccountably made to seem so by the author. He is repeatedly set up to sink himself or other people rather than questions in order, one suspects, to put the reader in the picture - "The bombing of Dresden! How had he

keeping with the ethos of the trail: it is not worth investing too much emotion in your companion when many of them are likely to die on the way.

Gwen Moffat does not amaze human dramas. Unlike many novelists working in the same genre as William Golding, John Fowles, and J. G. Farrell, she eschews irony, symbols and fine writing in her need to get on with the story. The real interest of the book lies in the trail itself, which is described in detail, almost, in fact, in close-up. The rights the travellers follow seem between a horse's ears, a butterfly on a bush, a rattlesnake in a gully. Violence and evil are secondary to a change in the wind or the course of a river. We are left with a strong sense that this is exactly what such a journey must have been like.

Recently published in paperback, *To the Honourable Miss S. and Other Stories* by Ret Marut a/k/a B. Traven (151pp. Lawrence Hill & Co, Westport, Conn. and Cienfuegos Press, Sunday, Orkney, £4.00/0 904564 43 2) contains fifteen stories by the author, who is best known for his novels *The Treasure of the Sierra Madras*, *The Death Ship* and others; the stories were written when he was working as an actor and journalist in Germany before and during the First World War, and have been translated by Peter Sisk. The book has an introduction by Will Wyatt, who produced the BBC film *B. Traven: A Mystery Solved*, on the identity of the writer (see also the TLS review of Traven's *The Carpenters*, December 18, 1981, and *Times* January 1, 1982).

forgot it." The comparison with Le Carré suggested on the dust-jacket falls a little flat. Newman's approach is that of a bull in a china shop rather than a spider in a web. Those who love tying up the intricate threads of Le Carré's plots may be foxed by a passage in *Level Five*. How - I ask the author - did Dieter know that the Stasi were waiting for Newman at the station?

Another passage makes the reader on the lookout for traces of Le Carré sit up fast. "There we worked. We were like *Maulwürfe*... How do you say that in English? He made energetic outward digging motions with his hands, and shoved his nose up into the air. 'Moles,' Newman grinned." But it is a blind alley - perhaps the author's private joke.

The comparison with John Buchan, also on the dust-jacket, falls flat too. Newman is hardly one of the five (or six) most brilliant men in Europe that Buchan's heroes always lead to be; and I think that Sandy Arhuthnot and Dick Hannay would have kept odd company with Newman and Don.

It is the archaeological side of the tale that is the most interesting. Ancient treasures are valued in novels both as numismatic relics and as bullion. From St Helena's Invention of the Cross to Peter Levi's first novel *The Head in the Sand* (which uses the Temple treasure from Jerusalem), archaeological investigators track down and take possession of objects which confer great wealth and great power both in the natural world and the supernatural. This is the basic pattern of *Level Five*. Schliemann's treasure is the acorn in the story, and Hart-Davis brings in the Dorak treasure as well. (The Dorak treasure has been a celebrated fire-ditch topic with archaeological speculators for some time.)

But the archaeological formula in one that only really works if the ancient remains are brought to life in some way and if the main characters are striving for more than loot. There is an intriguing suggestion in *Level Five* that Schliemann's treasure could become a national symbol that East and West Germany would compete to possess, but the force of this idea is never developed. Nevertheless the book is left with a lively and fast-moving story which, short of its portentous qualities, will satisfy a demand for excitement.

Practising panic

By Patricia Craig

DEE PHILLIPS:
The Coconut Kiss

192pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £6.95.
0 340 27468 9

Dee Phillips, with her second novel, joins that large group of authors who go in for meticulous reconstruction of a bygone era. *The Coconut Kiss* (an unappealing title) is set in the late 1920s, though its vantage point is the present; the narrating voice is knowing and understanding about the childhood vagaries it recounts. Flora Goodman, the seven-year-old heroine, is, in spite of every advantage — conscientious parents, affectionate brothers and sisters, above-average intelligence — a victim of compulsive anxiety, and well-versed in a sequence of tiny, intricate rituals for averting disaster. Head-shaking,

sniffing, touching objects first with the left hand and then the right, are among the plays adopted by timorous Flora to propitiate the unseen forces that have it in for her. "Her habits" is the family euphemism for the child's obsessive actions.

All this is sympathetically contemplated and carefully documented (as a child psychiatrist Dee Phillips is undoubtedly familiar with this form of neurosis in the young), as is the lost London world of cobbled streets, elementary schools, horse-drawn carts, proper lamp-posts with arms to swing from (of benefit only to the agile and enterprising, no use at all to Flora), and those prosaic tin advertisements that have now acquired a spurious picturesque value. *The Coconut Kiss* of the title is a type of sweet, a gift to Flora from one of her teachers, and begged from her by scrounging Ruby, whose role in the novel is that of a *bête noire*. Uncertain of how to regard this aggressive, defective nine-year-old, who is either grotesque or pitiful,

able, Flora spends a great deal of time fleeing from her, placating her with pennies taken surreptitiously from a tin kept in a cupboard under the stairs, and praying that she may soon gain a place at a special school. The word "soppy", applied to Ruby, does not mean ineffectual and affected, as it does in certain books of the period (Richard Crompton's "William" stories, for example, which Dee Phillips mentions), or meekish, its more usual sense, but weak in the head — and disarming Ruby is epileptic and incontinent too.

She is lumbered, moreover, with a gang of delinquent elders: a thieving mother, a violent father or grandfather (his precise connection with Ruby is deliberately left unclear), a bawling uncle and a drunken aunt, all of whose brutish offences are only hinted at (thereby gaining in frightfulness in Flora's nimble imagination). Like the comic object of horror that gets its effectiveness from a nightmarish ubiquity, Ruby keeps popping up everywhere: in the school playground, naturally enough, but also in the butcher's, the chip shop, at every street corner window by Flora, at an upstairs passage overlooking the Goodman's garden, and "hiding near the church hall". When Flora is admitted to hospital suffering from diphtheria, we are not surprised to find that the patient in the next bed is Ruby.

Dee Phillips is not quite bold enough to turn Flora's troubles into a comedy, though the lighter aspects of her heroine's chronic alarm have not escaped her. Apprehensive Flora, for whom daily living is a matter of obstacles and potential hazards, is a good-hearted child who really makes an effort to suppress her irrational panics; she means to practise kindness, too, as assiduously as any Victorian Sunday School heroine. There are moral lessons to be drawn from Ruby and children like her — leg-iron, deformities and other disabilities were more obtrusive than they are at present — and Dee Phillips does not neglect these.

Flora has no talent for friendship outside her family (one promising alliance, initiated behind a school-room cupboard, fails to prosper), but the family provides a jolly, regenerative haven and makes up for a great deal. The richness of working-class domestic camaraderie is repeatedly savoured. Nothing untoward can take place here — only a little lusty friction over the bobbed heads of Flora's older sisters. To its great advantage, *The Coconut Kiss* has less of the case-history about it than Dee Phillips's earlier novel; it is level-headed, unpretentious and agreeable in tone.

Modest misdemeanours

By J. K. L. Walker

BETTE MEYRICK:

Cockles Is Convent
160pp. Llandysul: Gomer Press. £4.95.
0 85088 5

Welsh randiness is a legend half as old as time, despite Kilvert's tacit silence on the subject. Even the Welsh of English-speaking Pembroke, scene of Dylan Thomas's *Llaregub* and now of Bette Meyrick's romp, forego regional differences and scratch the national itch busily. (Elegant Tenby, after all, nurtured Augustus John, to say nothing of the prissy-looking Gwen of the self-portrait diving naked off the rocks.)

Bette Meyrick's *Llaregub* is Llanporth, where Evan Evans keeps a high-class drapery in the High Street and worries that he is less troubled by the itch than his friend Dai Rees, a successful builder and womanizer. Can it have been gypsyish Mrs Dago Jones's herbal remedies with which, as a child, he was forced-into? Why, after five years, is his pretty little wife Myra still childless? Evan's professional eye scans the village women, placing them according to his own League Table: Grada Four boned and corseted, woolen bloomers (doubly gussied), modesty vests and camisoles (for the year is 1925), up to the precious few in Grade One with their flesh-coloured stockings

and crêpe-de-chine camiknickers. He lusts timidly after Mrs Ruby Tye (Grade One) — who, following a co-trempet with two under-lingers, September evening on the upper floor of a GWR guard's van, with mistress Ann Thomas, the new schoolmistress, and after Selina Williams, daughter of the big house, transformed by a summer in France from a dourly Welsh rabbit to a real little *croque-monsieur*. But then, he goes, furtively, to Mrs Dai Jones for the antidote to the lusty remedies: cockles. Evan consumes them by the bucketful, together with ginger-beer — a homelier and more convenient aphrodisiac than the delicate oysters and champagne. And he brings fatherhood to Evan and his life to Llanporth.

Evan's dance is performed against the operetta backdrop of Welsh village life, peopled with his able comic Welsh stereotypes: the original Miss Gwendoline Davies, the accompanist; flautist Lloyd the Schoolmaster; Dull Reggie, stammering Umshla Watkios the Potter; the Know-All Jones, mistress Isobel the Schoolmistress. Bette Meyrick works hard and busily to keep on the move according to the rules of the genre, but sometimes the scenes always fall a little flat, as if the author never quite got enough. Perhaps the fault is in the reader, lulled to rouseness and the real thing by the farce of the *faux* measured, too predictable line of her over-the-top GWR, but on *Inter-City*.

Jealousy and junk

By Mary Furness

VIRGINIA FASNDIDGE:

Something Else
152pp. Constable. £5.95.
0 09 46340 7

Virginia Fasnidge's second novel, *Something Else*, can best be described as a psychodrama played out between three characters — Amanda, Gerald and Denny — in a triangular relationship. As the novel opens Amanda is suffering the numbing effect of having lost her father, around whom her existence was built. Gerald reads of his death in the papers and, from some odd remarks once let slip by his loose-living mother, who is now dead, he derives a slender reason for thinking that Amanda's father might also have been his own. He conceives a desire to insinuate himself into Amanda's life and to establish some kind of relationship with her — mainly on account of the money she will have inherited.

He and his friend Denny run a hand-to-mouth junk business and live together in a blustering way. Gerald takes Denny along for moral support on his first visit to Amanda, and Denny grudgingly witnesses the joy with which Amanda unquestioningly accepts her new relation; witnesses, too, the self-importance and sense of identity that this confers on Gerald. Denny grows jealous, brooding and discontented. He consults the *Ching* while Gerald blithely spends all his spare time visiting Amanda. The money is now of secondary importance, but Gerald and Amanda are nevertheless making plans to set up an antique business together, excluding Denny.

Denny starts to make secret rendezvous with Amanda. Her uncomprehending complicity in the worm that causes the cancer: the deceit has nothing to do with her; but this is enough, and Denny begins to take considerable pleasure in the feeling of power that deceiving Gerald gives him.

When, on one of these visits, Denny declares his love for Amanda, she receives the news as she hears to receive almost everything, nervously and incomprehensibly. Inevitably

almost by unconscious design, Denny's part, Gerald finds out, and they are seeing each other and talking. By telling n the about Denny is nearly succeeds he has persuaded to see him again and is required to find that their romance has not been consummated (he finds the sex only lusty friendship).

Amanda, distraught and confused, goes off to Wales to be alone. The clever Denny tracks her down and clears himself of the smirch Denny has put on him; the clouds part and they both and they finally consummate their love. They set off back to London intending to get married, but are involved in a car accident in which Amanda is killed, and Denny only saved by the arrival of Gerald on the scene. One is left to wonder if these two resume their factory existence together, with a threat from Amanda.

In this by no means unexciting novel Virginia Fasnidge purveys with a light and accurate touch a friendship in which destruction and jealousy play a greater part than creativity, and in which the punishment is a prison, out of which both parties striking and thrown out, cripples them and throws them back on each other — Amanda and Denny taking the role of passive and tragic pawn.

Published towards the end of the *Loving Couples*, edited by Alan Bradley and Kay Jamieson (Llandysul: Gomer Press. £5.95. 0 85088 2X) is a collection of stories on the theme of love and marriage. It includes "Poie a Deux," by Mercer; "At the Brasserie," by Tinniswood; "A Job for the Smith," by John Wain; "Pony and Lunch," by Beryl Bainbridge; "Pity of it all," by Stan Barstow; "Anybody's," by Keith Waterhouse; "Pastoral," by Rachel Barter; "Proceedings," by Chris Ware; "Walk Before Breakfast," by Bakewell; "The Companion," by Robert Furbush; "Christina Over," by Alan Bleasdale; and "Les," by Frances McKelvey. The book, published under the auspices of the Ulster Historical Foundation, contains military and topographical minutiae likely to appeal primarily to the members of the Foundation.

Other readers may regret that he does not more often address himself to the important questions of the constantly changing relationships between the three kingdoms, since when he does he writes interestingly and suggestively.

Straddling the divide

By T. C. Barnard

DAVID STEVENSON:

Scottish Covenanters and Irish Confederates

364pp. Belfast: Ulster Historical Foundation. £15.
0 901915 24 0

Historians eager to set the English Civil War in a wider context write sometimes of "The War of the Three Kingdoms." They describe how the stubborn Scottish Covenanters and the disgruntled Irish Catholics, by rebelling against the insensitive, centralizing rule of Charles I, helped to bring about the first Civil War in 1642. Accounts of this type usually select from the intricate history of Scotland and Ireland during the 1640s only those episodes which reveal the Scots or Irish meddling deeply in English affairs. Thus we have been told often why the Scots entered the English Civil War in 1643, and why these awkward stiles so quickly quarrelled. We also know why, and with what consequences, the Scots invaded England in 1648 and associated themselves after 1649 with the cause of Charles II. Political mistakes brought English reprisals: after 1650 Scotland was first invaded, then conquered and finally annexed. Irish events have been chronicled in much the same way. In particular Charles I's hopes that he might persuade Irish Catholic troops to fight for him in England if in return he granted religious and political concessions to the rebels have been used to emphasize his political miscalculations. Such studies generally remind us of the interdependence of Irish and English or of Scottish and English events. What we have hitherto lacked, and what David Stevenson now supplies, is a full account of how Scottish and Irish affairs in the 1640s interlocked. It is appropriate that Dr Stevenson should undertake this survey, since his earlier books offer the fullest modern narratives of the Scottish Revolution and of the Scots' impact on the Puritan Revolution in England.

When dispossessed Irish Catholic rebels in October 1641, it was the recently planted counties of Ulster, although not always the communities of newly settled Scots, which suffered first. Although both Charles I and the English Parliament wanted quickly to quell the rising, political and practical difficulties prevented any action. Instead the Scottish Covenanters acted, fearful lest the Presbyterians and their relations in Ulster should all be massacred or expelled. By August 1642 11,000 Scottish soldiers had landed in the province. Until 1649, when Oliver Cromwell sailed to Ireland, this was the largest force to confront the Irish insurgents, and as Stevenson plausibly argues, distracted the rebels from attacking Dublin and probably stopped them from capturing the entire island. The Scottish army, irked some enough to those who had to pay and feed it and soon an extra source of contention between the Covenanters and the English Parliament, nevertheless protected Ulster Protestants against the Catholic rebels. It patronized and indeed spread Presbyterianism in the north, and thereby made sure that the Scottish Presbyterian interest established deep and tenacious roots.

Stevenson's thorough study amply demonstrates how, and how importantly, this army affected Ulster. In its formative period as a Scots settlement, some may perhaps find his meticulous survey, anchored firmly to the sources, too thorough. The book, published under the auspices of the Ulster Historical Foundation, contains military and topographical minutiae likely to appeal primarily to the members of the Foundation. Other readers may regret that he does not more often address himself to the important questions of the constantly changing relationships between the three kingdoms, since when he does he writes interestingly and suggestively.

He reveals worlds rather than those confined within the political boundaries of the three separate kingdoms. The Gaelic world, which had hitherto embraced the Highlands and Islands and much of western and northern Ireland, was being split into isolated redoubts. The campaigns of the 1640s, when Gaelic soldiers travelled freely within this world, usually at the behest of their leaders, Lord Antrim and Alexander MacColl, in order to resist their hereditary enemies, the Campbells, were the last occasions on which united Gaels imperilled the newer Protestant societies of Ireland and Scotland. But as those older bonds, formed of kinship and shared values, weakened, so fresh ones came into being. A resolute and even aggressive Scottish Presbyterian community expanded from the Scottish Lowlands into the eastern regions of Ulster.

The ideas and behaviour of this society also conflicted with what the English government intended for Scotland and Ireland. The lines of communication within these two worlds, whether Gaelic and Catholic or Scots and Protestant, were, as successive English administrators acknowledged, strong. Among them could move migrants, some seasonal, others permanent, so too, as the 1630s and 1640s showed, did dangerous ideas, deviant religious practices, war materials and soldiers. Official fears that these resilient communities which straddled parts of Ireland and Scotland were undermining English schemes for the peaceful ordering of each kingdom led to intermittent efforts to smash these distinctive societies. In the 1650s, for example, it was not only Gaelic society which was to be emasculated by expropriation, killing or executing its leaders,

but the Scottish Presbyterianism were to be rendered harmless by uprooting and dispersing them to other parts of Ireland. In the event, of course, an English administration had the resources to achieve such far reaching changes.

What Stevenson confirms, with a wealth of detail, is that each of Charles I's three kingdoms might be a discrete political entity, with its own culture, religion and institutions, but that there were other interests, some cultural, some confessional and others economic, which lessened and might even dissolve this sense of separatism. Those who inhabited the complex world around the littoral of the Irish Sea, although they might differ in nationality and religion, often had more in common than with those who dwelt on the eastern coasts of England and Scotland. The Scots soldiered in Ireland

in the 1640s because it had long been a part of their world. Travel between Scotland and Ireland, as between Ireland and the western seaboard of Wales and England, was normal. It was not commonplace. Journeys between Edinburgh and London were longer and more hazardous. The unusually protracted campaign of the 1640s may explain what has been detected in the next decade, a rapid increase in the Scottish settlement of Ulster. Former soldiers had helped to people Munster with Protestants in the early seventeenth century. It is plausible to conjecture that the same was the case in later seventeenth-century Ulster. If this were so, then the importance of Dr Stevenson's subject grows, and the Covenanters' army not only defended and saved the nascent Scottish colony, but, through its disbanded members, added decisively to its size.

Cost of confinement

By Vieda Skultans

MARK FINNANE:

Insanity and the Insane in Post-Famine Ireland
241pp. Croom Helm. £13.95.
0 7099 0402 9

The study of the insane in Ireland provides a markedly different picture from the English one: the Irish were considerably ahead of the English in the institutional treatment of the mentally ill. Mark Finnane's book fills a gap long lamented by Irish historians, and presents a picture of insanity which challenges previous assumptions in several important ways. During the decades following Union in 1800, a system of lunatic asylums was established, considered by many English visitors to be the best anywhere. Whereas state measures for improvement of railways or for land reform were resisted, lunacy reform was an area where the state in Ireland could demonstrate its power. What England saw only in 1845, or since in 1838, Ireland had already witnessed in its asylums in 1817: the legislative provision of asylums for the entire country.

The paradox is that such a poor economy could foster such a well-developed institution. In particular, Andrew Scull's thesis that the development of large institutions for the insane was a response to capitalism and the fragmentation of the family is questioned in this new book. Finnane points out that the problem in Ireland was that the country was not yet sufficiently capitalized, and asylums were frequently welcomed as sources of employment and of trade. The sad part of the story is that within a few decades of their opening the asylums were beset with the same problems as doomed their English counterparts. The growth of the medical profession and of psychiatry as a specialist field ousted the lay managers from their familiar role of gentle caretakers. With each decade the asylum population doubled. The increase in both admission and residence rates led to an exhaustion of funds and inevitably to the deterioration of asylum conditions and care.

The emphasis of asylum politics shifted from the mid-century obsession of the inspectorate with confining all the insane to the provincial preoccupation of the early twentieth century with reducing numbers of inmates and certainly costs. The interests of the confined themselves were largely ignored in the course of this shift of power.

As in England, ideas about the therapeutic importance of early diagnosis and treatment gave way to anxieties lest the asylums became clogged with incurables, and an emphasis on the importance of early discharge. This latter policy was pursued to such an extent that asylums vied with each other in their race to discharge patients. Concern with therapy and moral welfare was replaced by anxieties about costs, numbers and administrative problems.

these breakdowns commonly involve recent or prolonged stress," he says for example; "commonly the loss of children, at other times failed personal relationships or 'disappointments' as the asylum terminology had it." The asylum terminology is surely more eloquent here, than our contemporary jargon.

Finnane goes on to claim a family context for most committals, despite the very large majority of unmarried persons in asylums. Here again it seems that anti-psychiatry has influenced his interpretation and has fed back spurious evidence to support contemporary ideas. He writes that the important function of the asylum was the disposal of those who had "broken down". Quite what the function of the inverted commas is is not made explicit, but it certainly seems that Finnane wishes his partial case histories to be seen as evidence for the labelling theory of insanity.

One aspect of asylum life which the book brings out clearly and poig-

nantly is the numbing effect of asylum life on its inmates. Finnane shows how the stultifying asylum routine was perfectly constructed to destroy any sense of the passage of time. And yet in their ward rounds, reviewing the mental health of patients, doctors would endlessly repeat questions designed to elicit knowledge of the passage of time. Patients' moving replies to medical interrogation on this matter, such as "I am always here, I live here" or "a lifetime" testify to their personal tragedies.

Despite certain glib assumptions this is an interesting and moving book which does close a gap in the literature as well as suggesting directions for further, more cautious research testing current theories against historical facts. One final point: the title of the book is misleading since it suggests a relationship between the great famine and insanity. In fact, the famine is not mentioned in the book at all.

The sound of the islands

By Douglas Sealy

J. L. CAMPBELL (Editor and translator):

Hebridean Folk Songs III
Tunes transcribed and annotated by Francis Collinson
432pp. Clarendon Press: Oxford
University Press. £25.
0 19 53215 9

The three volumes of *Hebridean Folk Songs* contain 135 songs, many in more than one version, and 225 musical transcriptions. There are 5,000 lines of Gaelic verse, with English translations and historical and lexicographical notes. This final volume contains, as well as forty-seven songs, a useful list of the themes and motifs of the songs, a list of the correspondences with forty-eight of the songs used by Mrs Kennedy-Fraser in her *Songs of the Hebrides* and other volumes, further musical notes, and photographs of four of the singers.

There have been other extensive collections of Hebridean songs, in particular K. C. Craig's *Oran Luath Mhàiri, Nighean Alasdair*

which contained the texts of 146 songs taken down from one informant, but none of which devoted equal attention to words and music, and accompanied them with so much information and so many indispensable speakers of Nova Scotia, on Cape Breton, to sing these songs. It is mostly in the memories of these old people that the words and tunes are preserved. The editors of *Hebridean Folk Songs* have collected what remains lest it should perish.

The reader who knows no Gaelic may wonder what it is that makes these songs, extemporized with the help of formulae phrases, shifting jorlily from one subject to another, describing the life of the gentry during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, so fascinating and irreplaceable. It is that nowhere else in song is emotion — love, hate, anger, composition — laid so bare. Not even in the Border Ballads, Sappho, or the communal songs of the Eastern and Southern world, does one find that blend of words and music and anguish that there is in

Mh' taca seo'n uillich,
Bu lliom 'urram roimh cheud,
Ch' mhàin' air m' m' bliadhna
na lannan nan speur.

The literal translation cannot convey anything, but a reduced meaning: This time a year ago, I had your regard before I married. I'm no more to you this year than the fowls of the skies.

The songs must be heard sung, and happily the School of Scottish Studies have made some of them available through Tangent Records, though the newcomer should be warned that the peculiar vocal timbre takes a little getting used to. On hearing Hebridean Folk Songs a traveller in the Highlands once wrote: "You would imagine a troop of female demons to have been assembled here, but once one is taught one is hooked for life."

Robert Stuart

Lilac Tree

What launched the lilac tree
like a flare-burst over the fields?
Who lit its taper-roof?

Not May, or the month of May,
Not me, whose finger burns
to touch the lilac-flower

Tracking the tecs

By T. J. Binyon

JULIAN SYMONS:

The Great Detectives
144pp. Orbis Publishing. £7.95.
0 85013 362 0

It seems to have been Ronald Knox who began the game of treating detective stories not as fiction, but as historical texts, teasing out from them every scrap of information as to the life of the detective, and affecting to believe, with a waggish seriousness, that inconsistencies and contradictions of evidence between stories were not due to authorial carelessness or forgetfulness, but hid hitherto unsuspected truths about the career or Watson's domestic life. Julian Symonds has become the latest to play this game, and he makes a fine hand of it, too. His book gives us fascinating information on the lives of no fewer than seven great detectives of the past, and demonstrates not only a deep knowledge of the works in which they appear, but also a keen ear for their creation as literary individuals.

The collection opens, as it should, with a visit to the reading room in

the depths of Sussex, whose retirement is disturbed by a young girl anxious to trace a missing fiancé. The problem has certain similarities with earlier investigations, and Holmes has no difficulty in finding the lost man. Some notes on Miss Marple's life, contributed by Leonard Clement, the former vicar of St Mary Mead, are then followed by a real journalistic coup: a taped interview with Archie Goodwin, in which the secret of Wolfe's last case is revealed.

In the next essay Symonds himself does a little detection on the person of Elery Queen, and adds an account of an early Queen investigation: Maigret passes a typical day in Paris; Poirot's life and habits are discussed on the basis of scattered notes from the pen of Captain Arthur Hastings; and, finally, Symonds travels to Los Angeles and imbibes bourbon with a private investigator who might possibly have been the original for Chandler's Philip Marlowe.

Julian Symonds has obviously enjoyed writing these pieces as much as one enjoys reading them. Although he keeps scrupulously to the evidence of the texts, he also conforms to a tradition of the genre by making a discovery or two, revealing the

existence of unknown links between several of his seven subjects. Charmingly illustrated by Tom Adams, the book, with all its detective story buff would be hard put to find a better way of redeeming a rediscovered Christmas book token.

JOHN FARRIS:

Cathcombe
439pp. Hodder and Stoughton. £6.95.
0 340 27827 7

Thousands of years ago a strange people, half-cat, half-mao, lived in Africa. In science and technology they had developed far beyond us, and they chose, for reasons incomprehensible to our puny minds, to inscribe their knowledge in tiny letters on a lot of red diamonds which they then hid in a cave under Mount Kilimanjaro. When this is discovered, there is naturally a lot of competition for the secrets. One or two good ideas and some convincing action scenes are plus points; a cast of thousands and excruciatingly slow development minus ones. But this is really one for the Bermuda Triangle freaks.

T. J. B.